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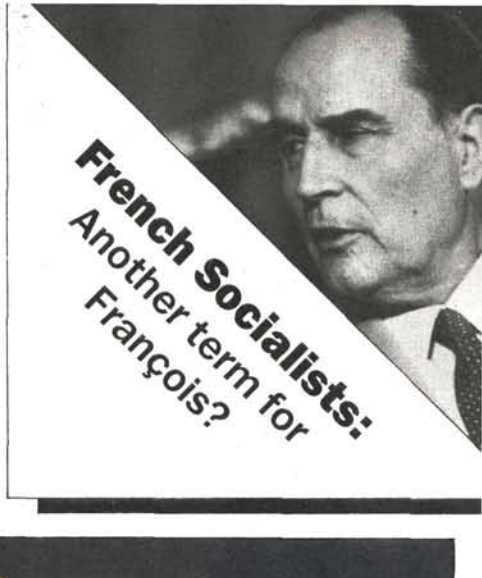
NEW STATESMAN
10 April 1987 IR£1.34 US$1.50 By Air 90p

- Kellner on the polls
- Hitchens on arms deals
- The Met against Thatcherism
- *Blue Velvet*
- Nadine Gordimer
- Japanese food



French Socialists: Another term for François?

SOCIALIST SPYING POLICY

"It is possible to dream up a scenario in which a Labour government & a conservative secret service might be in accord on the need for a covert operation"

Ken Follett

Cover illustration: David Hine

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Q

“I never had the answer to anybody’s life. I don’t have the answer to my own.”
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

PEARLS OF WISDOM, SPARKS OF TRUTH, FLASHES OF WIT AND THE LETTER Q.

“*Pete Townshend’s tuning was always perfect except when the neck was hangin’ off the guitar.*” *RON WOOD*

“*I was in tears. I was completely destroyed. Because I thought, I’ve done nothing wrong, I’ve completely changed my behaviour and I’m still back in the nick.*” *HUGH CORNWELL OF THE STRANGLERS*

“*I think you come to a point in your life, around when you’re thirty, when you look back to the dream you had when you were twenty and you try to assess just where you stand now in relation to that dream.*” *BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN*

“*I have this memory of Robbie Coltrane standing on the bar with his head inside a chandelier.*” *EMMA “KETTLES” THOMPSON (TUTTI FRUTTI)*

“*The ambition of any sensible modern pop group should be to score fast, split young and leave a good sounding Greatest Hits album.*” *ON CULTURE CLUB*

“*They just smashed a few milk bottles over my head. It was horrible. One of these boys was standing over me and said: You’d better reform Bronski Beat! And I was going, Tomorrow! I’ll do it tomorrow!*” *JIMMY SOMERVILLE OF THE COMMUNARDS*

“*It’s all change down at Snipcock & Tweed. You see literature; they see a UK and Commonwealth Volume Rights Limited Term Licence with TV and film escalators.*” *ON LITERARY AGENTS*

“*I get excited staying in all these different hotels . . . I’m always curious what the wallpaper’s gonna be like.*” *BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN*

“*It has next to nothing in common with the boy-meets-tractor films which have until now been the staple of Soviet domestic cinema.*” *ON FAREWELL*

“*Once again Vietnam is viewed as an episode in American history, rather than America being viewed as an horrific intrusion in Vietnamese history.*” *ON PLATOON*

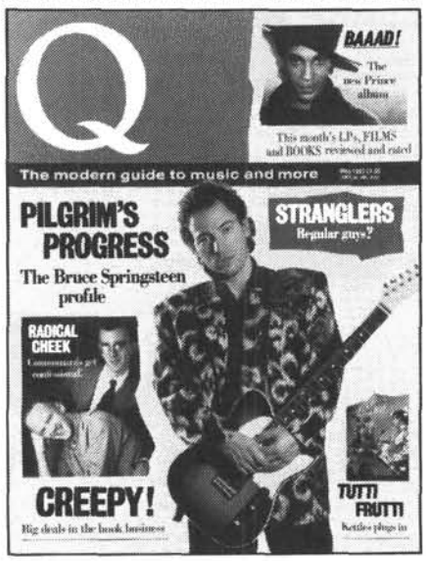
“*When he’s being carted off by the police his cries of “I’m a pervert! Hip, hip, hooray!” have a curious dignity to them.*” *ON PERSONAL SERVICES*

“*The singles and albums charts are now as separate as they were in the mid’ 70s when The Bay City Rollers reigned supreme and Led Zeppelin never released a single.*” *ON THE DECLINE OF THE 45*

“*Your typical modern Strangler is a card-carrying Reasonable Bloke. If it’s raining he will carry an umbrella. He will even share it with you.*” *ON THE STRANGLERS*

“*Q magazine is the modern guide to music and more. This month’s issue is available at your newsagent now.*” *MARK ELLEN*

OVER 100 LP’s REVIEWED AND RATED.



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CONTENTS

FEATURES

Boston Diary: Frances Morrell 4
Peter Kellner: Must Labour lose? 7
Ken Follett: When Labour next runs MI5 8
Duncan Campbell: *Secret Society* to be aired 10
Trevor Jones and **Jock Young:** Police take fresh look at left 11
Seymour Melman and **Jeremy Leggett** continue our defence series with a look at the 'military-industrial complex' 12
John Ellis: Checkland's gamble 15
Christopher Hitchens: There *isn't* a Moscow deal that will suit the American right 16
David Bell: French socialists want new friends 18
Peter Chippindale; *News on Sunday* prepares to blast off 18
Peter Hennessy: All party criticism of Whitehall 19
Charles Grant and **David Goodhart:** No more foreign exchange controls 20
Dai Smith: 'Revisionist negativism' and Bevan 21

ARTS

Simon Cunliffe: Cinema 23
Hugo Williams: Television 24
Andrew Clements: Opera 24
Stephanie Jordan: Dance 25
Naseem Khan: Work in progress on Asian arts 26

BOOKS

Glyn Hughes: Nadine Gordimer 27
Nick Caistor: Roa Bastos 28
Chris Mullin: Tibet 29
Maureen Duffy: Animal rights 29
Tobias Abse: Italian social democracy 30
Lesley Smith: Poem 30
Jenny Diski: Paperbacks 31

BACKCHAT

Diana Eden: Infra dig 36
Al Weil: First person 36
Colin Spencer: Japanese food 37
Crossword 37
Weekend competition 38
Ralph Edney 39
Chess: George Botterill 39
This England 39

PLUS

Roger Woddis 4
Christian Clark 16
Letters 32

NEXT WEEK

The very caring women of the SDP: Sarah Benton reports. Plus tactical voting and how it might just work

Taking crime seriously

CRIME AND the left have had an uneasy relationship over the past decade, especially in inner cities, and, among these, especially in Inner London. The 'good' reason for that is the evidence that policing has been discriminatory, especially of black people: increasingly rough and arbitrary: and is anyway not delivering the goods. The bad reason is that a large section of the left, again particularly in London, is irreconcilably against the police, and against reform of the police.

This is among the most malign and harmful strands of the 'London effect'. It takes real incidents of police violence, or of failure to react, or of racial discrimination — and makes of these incidents not a platform for reform but an indictment which presumes a political and administrative assault which no government, or local authority could possibly institute and no police force could bear. A cycle of alienation is then constructed which, if not broken, drives the left — sometimes whole councils — and police into mutually antagonistic camps where the effectiveness of the police and other agencies to address the problem is lessened.

Its greatest political error is to displace the entire problem on to the attitudes and policies of the police and of the government, and to deny that there is an objective problem of rising crime and a real and justified fear of it.

The contribution the government has made to rising crime is very large — and has been dramatically highlighted by the leaking earlier this week of the Metropolitan Police 'Force Appraisal', fully analysed on p.11. In making millions of the already poor bear the brunt of a war on inflation, it has removed young people from 'the network of informal social control' (in the words of the Appraisal) with predictable results.

A reformist strategy on the left is available. It rests on two main pillars. First, it recognises the fact and the fear of crime: it is concerned to learn the parameters of the rise in crime, to identify those who perpetrate it and those most at risk from it. Such a process touches raw nerves: when Professor Jock Young of Middlesex Polytechnic produced evidence that blacks were disproportionately represented in crime figures, he was greeted with charges of racism — though some black leaders have since used the same evidence to call for more resources in dealing with the issue.

Secondly, it calls for reform in policing methods, on more resources for the police and other social agencies, for a greater concentration on crime work by the police, on making explicit the link between unemployment and social disintegration and crime and on a progressive prevention and punishment policy.

The evidence of the 'Force Appraisal' document is that an alliance *can* be made with the police, but that it depends on a mutual recognition that those who have the least access to resources and employment are the most likely to be sucked into criminality and to be traumatised by it. These are the people the left claims to represent and to assist. It must do so, and be seen to do so. □

On the offensive

ALARM IS AN altogether proper reaction to Gerald Howarth's obscenity bill, which, with Mrs Thatcher's support, received its second reading last Friday. In fact, it's surprising that the media (artists' own publications aside) haven't raised even more of a cry: a bill which would extend the definition of 'obscene' to words and images which cause gross *offensiveness* to a *reasonable person* is self-evidently dangerous.

There's no reason to focus on *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Bizet's *Carmen*, impressionist painting, Epstein's sculpture, the Rolling Stones, Yeats' play *The Countess Cathleen*: all have been found to be 'grossly offensive' by sections of the 'reasonable' public. And take this Sunday's announcement that Mrs Whitehouse finds *EastEnders* offensive. The BBC is aware of her opinion, and that the establishment chooses to behave as though she were a reasonable person: were Howarth's bill to become law, the Beeb would surely begin a retreat into natural, protective, insidious self-censorship.

From the other side, what price the objections of, for example, a gay person to malevolently distorted representations of homosexuality? In the current climate, would she/he have a chance of being judged reasonable?

However, it isn't enough for the left to protest this dangerous bill; it needs, urgently, to decide what its own position on censorship is. There are, presumably, words and images which *should* be forbidden public expression — but, first, the burden of proof should always lie with the would-be censor. Curtailing expression is dangerously slick and addictive. Second, there must be a coherent rationale to any programme on obscenity: it cannot, for instance, merely be based on guesswork about its possible effects; or political or social prejudice; or, *merely*, the likelihood that people will find it offensive — whether they be disgusted of Bromley or London's Jewish theatregoers. □

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BOSTON DIARY

Boston — 'bean town' as it is affectionately known by the locals — was not quite what I expected. The home town of the Yankee bluebloods is still run by a tough Irish political machine headed by Mayat Flynn at City Hall. Mean streets still house a black population which is de facto segregated by housing and education.

The superimposed bloom of the international yuppy civilisation was a surprise. Covent Garden expatriates would have felt at home immediately in the city centre. They could have taken care of their jet lag at the Sky Club. Before lying in a jacuzzi overlooking Boston harbour you can ride the life cycle whose computer screen tells you your heart rate and calorie loss as you pedal. The scruncher will stretch your tired back. The abductor/adductor will keep your thighs in perfect trim.

If you are a dink (double income no kids) you can join top-tier yuppies and buy an unbelievably expensive condominium in the Boston equivalent of the Docklands development. You can shop by credit card and telephone at 2.00 am from a library of catalogues. Your refined palate will be catered for by a whole range of restaurants, all of which will offer you fish and meat grilled with mesquite — the latest fashionable barbecue wood — or blackened, that is covered with the latest fashionable herb paste.

Fortunately, coming from London, I am addicted to precisely such a potent political cocktail. And the extraordinary charm and courtesy of Bostonians from whichever side of the tracks made a welcome change from the macho boorishness which passes for manliness in some progressive circles in London.

○

An important American political dynasty has its power base in Massachusetts. Joseph Patrick Kennedy III is this generation's toothy, handsome, standard bearer: he took his seat in Congress in January representing Tip O'Neill's old Boston seat. Joe Kennedy, despite his support for people's energy and kindred causes, does not like to be known as liberal: a kind of conservative yuppy, he supported the bombing of Libya and characterises himself as 'new democrat'.

Some political techniques are timeless. Kennedy had a tough fight in the primary contest for the Democratic nomination for his Congressional seat, against Roosevelt's son Jimmy and a strong local candidate George Bachrach. In Boston even a Kennedy has to prove he is not a carpetbagger; so Joe bought a family house in the district and pledged that his young twins would attend the local public school with the ordinary children of the city.

Local papers revealed last week that, with the election safely over, the twins had been removed from the local school and sent to Buckingham, Browning, Nichols, an exclusive private establishment in nearby Cambridge. Kennedy, when contacted for confirmation, disclaimed responsiblity. He was, he said, far too busy to involve himself in the questions of his children's education. These personal, unpolitical decisions were taken by his wife Sheila, on the basis of the children's needs.

○

Mrs Kennedy is not the only white parent to reject the Boston public school system. No more than 30 per cent of eligible children use it. That third is 60 per cent black, 14 per cent Hispanic, seven per cent Asian and 17 per cent white.

The teachers themselves set a clear example. Only six of the 125 heads and less than one fifth of the teachers send their own children to be educated in the system they run. The level of professional commitment can be gauged by the fact that at least one third of the teachers — who earn on average $30,000 a year — leave promptly at 2.00 p.m. every day for their second job.

The present semi-apartheid system is the aftermath of desegregation and bussing, enforced by Federal Judge Garratty against the wishes of the locally elected, white, School Committee. White parents moved their children out into Catholic and private schools. To complete the crisis, all Federal funding for Youth Training was withdrawn by President Reagan in 1981 — by an amazing coincidence the same year that Mrs Thatcher withdrew all central government grant from the ILEA.

Presumably the Boston model of a segregated education service of last resort is what Mrs Thatcher and Kenneth Baker would like to achieve in London via cuts and City Technical Colleges. They should perhaps be forewarned that social harmony, property taxes, real estate values and the necessary supply of trained young people for the Massachusetts economy are all potentially threatened by the callous neglect of the public education service. Undoing the damage is everybody's top political priority in Boston today.

○

The need to protect the education service from party politics is a popular theme among conservative leader writers over here. In Boston they have actually done so — with unexpected results. The 13 members of the Boston School Committee are all directly elected on a non-partisan basis, and the Committee's in-fighting is legendary.

'Six Gun' Spillaire, the last Superintendent of the School Board, was known to call councillors outside to settle disputes in the traditional manly way. His successor, the scholarly Dr Lavalle Wilson, tried more up-to-the-minute personal methods. An out-of-town weekend retreat was arranged for the Committee in peaceful Dedham so the turbulent councillors could catch the 'togetherness' religion. Alas, within 12 hours the first councillor had broken ranks and was back in Boston to launch a Home Rule petition which involves reducing the Committee to nine and thus unseating four of his least favourite colleagues.

What makes it all so crazy is that the councillors are all said to be Democrats. Whether they perform well or badly their party can neither gain nor suffer, since each individual councillor need only consider her or his individual re-election: the reputation of the Committee or the Party does not affect them. More to the point, the voters cannot pass a verdict on the performance of the Committee. Only the party system with all its deficiencies enables the people to hold anyone in power accountable for anything.

○

Boston is an intellectual town, according to David Nyahan, leader writer on the *Boston Globe*. Less power-hungry than Washington, less money-orientated than New York, this city of 60 colleges is a very cerebral place to be. But intellectual power carries with it responsibilities. Nyahan is deeply shocked that no less than 29 per cent of the graduates of Harvard Business School last year went into investment banking, a profession which strictly confines itself to making money out of money.

Academic tempers began to fray when a leading luminary of the Business School found himself being publicly compared in the *Globe* to a piano player in a brothel who pretends he does not know what is going on upstairs. A hasty decision by John Shad, Head of President Reagan's Securities and Exchange Commission, to donate $20 million to the Business School for the teaching of ethics, far from calming the conflict, has aroused further ire.

For Nyahan, this gift from President Reagan's policeman, is an even greater affront. When I left Boston he was preparing to compare it to leaving a tip for the piano player in the brothel.

Frances Morrell

Frances Morrell is leader of the Inner London Education Authority.

ROGER WODDIS

Neil asks for a date

Had we but empathy and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
You would be slow to name the day
(Assuming that it's not in May),
And, keen to lead the winning side,
Would wait awhile to catch the tide
Which treats us, taken at the flood,
To five more years of tears and blood;
With your strong will, you'd still refuse
To cut the unemployment queues.
I can but hope you'll let me know
When you at last decide to go.

But at my back I always hear
A bold alliance hurrying near;
And yonder all before me lie
Deserts of anonymity.
Your years in office may be crowned,
I may no longer be around,
While all the world will blink to see
Your new-found love for Muscovy,
And all my *hwyl* will turn to dust,
And all my rhetoric to rust.
The Walworth Road's a lovely place,
But I shan't dare to show my face.

Let us have done with tease and stall,
And MPs climbing up the wall;
A firm date now, with rumours rife,
Would even bring the bored to life:
For, though they cannot match the *Sun*,
Elections are tremendous fun.

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Grand national obsession

IF MAORI VENTURE can win the Grand National as a 28-1 outsider, then the Labour Party could still win the most seats in the general election. But that's the only consolation in this despatch from the sawdust-strewn betting shop floor (none of your colour TVs, pot plants and sofas in Shoreditch bookies).

Labour has dived 11 points to 18 per cent in our Tick Tack Index, which measures the weight of money wagered on the parties. The Conservatives are up 8 points on the month to 76 per cent, and the Liberal/SDP Alliance has doubled to 6 per cent.

All three bookmakers have Labour at 4-1, which says it has a one-in-five chance of being the largest party; and two of them have the Tories at 1-5 odds-on favourite, which says they have a one-in-six chance of *not* being the largest party. And Coral, who were the most sceptical about the alliance on Monday this week, are thinking again after taking a £1,000 bet at 20-1.

The appetite of the *Newsnight*-watching classes for guesswork about the date and outcome of the election seems to be bulimic, being fed by more and more opinion polls. This column's contribution is to commission another bookmaker to quote odds on The Event.

Well, we didn't actually commission IG Index; we simply discovered that they had been running a book on the election for 18 months. Their main business is betting on the City markets, which offers capitalists a way of doing what they do anyway with fewer dealing costs and no tax. This means they bet in a different way, quoting the number of seats they think each party will win, rather than the odds on each party winning the most. This is how IG Index's quotations have moved:

IG Index

	Sep 85	Dec 86	Feb 87	Mar 87	NOW
Tory	285	315	320	353	350
Lab	240	271	254	220	216
Lib/SDP	98	43	58	58	66

IG Index offer a 10-seat 'spread' on the Tories and Labour, so if you think Labour will win more than 221 seats, you place an 'up' bet to win, say, £5 a seat for each seat over 221 — and to lose £5 per seat under 221. They will explain more fully on 01-828 7233.

As we go to press, betting on the date of the election is in turmoil; William Hill have October as favourite, Coral have June, and IG Index, who allow you to bet on the number of days the election will be before or after a certain date, have moved their middle date nine days earlier to 5 August 1987, which is halfway between June and October. The equivalent of Maori Venture in this context may be April 1988, at 66-1 with Coral.

John Rentoul

Message from the dance floor

I WENT to a party last week to which Neil Kinnock was also invited. We're not often thrown together like this, Neil and I. So, a girl has to do what a girl has to do!

'I wonder if you'd like to dance with me, Mr Kinnock?' I asked, in the bold feminist manner of the new woman.

It must have been the red dress that did it. Pausing only to get the OK from Glenys, he followed me, meek and bouncy as a Welsh spring lamb, to the dance floor. But once amid the bopping bodies, my initiative was lost, for lamb turned into lion and took control.

'Can you jive?' he roared, grabbing hold of my hand. 'You look like a girl that can jive.' This was more than I'd bargained for; I returned a non-committal answer.

'Oh well then, just hold on tight and don't let go.'

I can now reveal, from literally firsthand experience, that the leader of the Labour Party is very authoritative with his dancing partners. 'No, no, no, don't go changing hands, keep in the left, in the left.'

'But Mr Kinnock', I remonstrated, 'You keep changing hands.'

'Ah', he said, 'I'm allowed to, you see, I'm a man.' Well that explains it.

'Look, you're trying too hard, just take it easy, easy, that's it, easy, see.'

And, to put me firmly in my place, 'Any kid on a YTS scheme could manage this.'

He's a pretty nifty little mover, Mr Kinnock. He's got several fancy, nay, crafty, foot manoeuvres, and a jazzy way of executing turns. I did my humble best to follow.

'I danced with the leader of the Labour Party' looks good in the diary. I think, though, that 'I danced with the new Prime Minister' looks better. So, Mr Kinnock, or may I call you Neil?

— just hold on tight and don't let go
— stay in the left and don't let go
— and take it easy, easy does it . . .

Then we'll all be jiving on election night.

Sally-Anne Lomas

Fourth time unlucky

THE GERMAN Social Democrats' defeat in the state of Hesse comes as the fourth rotten result in a row: Bavaria, Hamburg, the Federal election and now the first-ever CDU government in Wiesbaden — almost enough to produce British levels of comradely despair about the future (if any) of the left.

On a reduced poll of 80 per cent, the SPD went down six points to 40.2 per cent: their former partners in the Hesse government, the Greens, rose from 5.9 per cent to 9.4 per cent — but the SPD's collapse in the cities undercut that rise.

Nuclear power was partly behind the defeat. The former state economics minister Ulrich Steger (SPD) had retrospectively sanctioned the continued operation of two nuclear reprocessing plants after demanding that production be run down following revelations that their administration was chaotic. The change of mind smashed the Red/Green coalition: a late effort by the Greens to patch it together again fuelled something of a recovery from a very low poll rating in February — only to be knocked back again by the fracas surrounding the resignation of Willy Brandt last month.

The strength of the CDU has increasingly shifted from Bonn to skilful local leaders — Lothar Späth and Manfred Rommel in Stuttgart, Eberhard Diepgen in Berlin — who manipulate the mixed economy to the advantage of their regions without much regard to the sanctity of market forces. The SPD, however, has still regarded Bonn as obsessively as the Labour Party regards Westminster: 13 years of power leave a deep imprint. With Brandt, the last great figure of Old Bonn, now away, the Hesse result has served notice that the SPD has to accompany its long-overdue ideological restructuring with a geographical shift of emphasis back to local policies and organisation. It ignores this warning at its peril.

Christopher Harvie

On the move . . .

The *New Statesman* has moved to larger offices.

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Alliance takes the lead

COUNCIL by-elections since the new year have resulted in a close three-way division of the votes cast, but with Labour running consistently third. By-elections since Rosie Barnes won Greenwich for the SDP have put the Alliance ahead of the Conservatives.

This is a slack time of year for by-elections, since many vacancies wait for the nationwide round of May elections to be filled. Altogether 41 by-elections were held between the beginning of January and last week. Gains and losses were as follows:

	Seats defended	Seats lost	Seats gained	Seats held now
Con	16	4	3	15
Lab	13	3	0	11
Lib	8	3	4	9
SDP	1	0	3	4
Others	2	0	0	2

Thirty-six of these contests were three-cornered, with Labour, Conservative and Alliance candidates (and sometimes others) fighting the local wards. Altogether almost 90,000 votes were cast as follows:

Conservative	30,988	35.6%
Liberal/SDP	28,917	33.2%
Labour	25,201	28.9%
Others	2,033	2.3%

In general these figures seem to conform to the normal pattern, with the Alliance performing significantly better than its nationwide opinion poll ratings (average 24 per cent over the whole period) and Labour significantly worse (opinion poll average 35 per cent).

What is significant, however, is that even though the Alliance has moved ahead since Greenwich, the effects on party support measured in by-election votes has been less than in opinion polls. Of almost 47,000 votes cast in 17 three-cornered contests since the beginning of March, the Alliance has won 34.8 per cent, the Tories 32.7 per cent and Labour 30.7 per cent. There are few signs there either of Tory strength or of complete Labour disintegration.

Peter Kellner

If the caption fits

No 12

We don't know what he's laughing at, or what Glenys is saying, but maybe you can brighten our gloom with captions or speech bubbles, one of which will be worth a £10 book token, by Tuesday 21 April (after two bank hols) for publication on 24 April. This week's £10 can be claimed by the person who correctly identifies the picture on the card which bore the caption below.

No 10: winner

Mrs T, *sotto voce* with venom: 'Announce the release of a dissident now, Nikita, or you will never play the balalaika again.' (Anon.) Hon. Mensh for: Mrs T: 'Nice to see you again, Mr Ambassador.' Gorbachev: 'Thank you, Your Majesty.' (Pamela Jeffrys, *London N10.*)

COUNCIL SCOREBOARD

8 January	
Torbay DC	Con hold
22 January	
South Lakeland DC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Kilmarnock & Loudon DC	Lab hold
Humberside CC	Lab hold
Harrow LBC	Lib hold
Trafford DC	Con hold
5 February	
Newham LBC	SDP GAIN (Lab)
12 February	
Carlisle DC	Lab hold
Cumbria CC	Lab hold
Wyre Forest DC	Lib hold
Gloucestershire CC	Con hold
17 February	
Kyle & Carrick DC	Con hold
19 February	
Hampshire CC	CON GAIN (Lab)
Essex CC	Lib hold
Broadland DC	*Con hold*
Cheshire CC	Con hold
Shropshire CC	Ind hold
26 February	
Kirklees DC	Lab hold
Congleton	Lib hold
Hart DC	Con hold
Rushmoor DC	Con hold
5 March	
Wolverhampton DC	LIB GAIN (Lab)
Harrogate DC	SDP GAIN (Con)
Isle of Wight CC	CON GAIN (Lib)
Hackney LBC	Lib hold
Macclesfield DC	SDP hold
Enfield LBC	Con hold
12 March	
Burnley DC	Lab hold
Sheffield DC	Lab hold
Solihull DC	Con hold
19 March	
Cambridgeshire CC	CON GAIN (Lib)
Redditch DC	Lab hold
Strathclyde Reg	Lab hold
Clwyd CC	Lab hold
Clwyd CC	Ind hold
Derby DC	Con hold
Merton LBC	Con hold
26 March	
Kyle & Carrick DC	*Lab hold*
Tunbridge Wells DC	LIB GAIN (Con)
2 April	
Torbay DC	LIB GAIN (Con)
Greenwich LBC	SDP GAIN (Lab)

NEWSTATESPERSON

The October man

IT WAS Viscount Whitelaw who punctured David Owen's 7 May bubble last weekend: blinking guilelessly into the cameras on *Face the Press* on Sunday, he said he would be 'very surprised if it is May 7'. He was, he said 'an October man'.

There are not many people whose 'surprise' could be taken for an assurance that 7 May was *not* going to happen. Whitelaw, deputy Prime Minister as well as Leader of the House of Lords, is perhaps the closest of all the Cabinet to the Prime Minister. He has earned that place hard.

His instincts, more than his ideology, are opposed to the modern Tory party. His worst moment in politics was at its hands, as he was bayed down at the 1981 Conservative conference by the capital punishers and the anti-immigrationists. A young MP named Edwina Currie, in a carefully rehearsed performance, brandished a pair of handcuffs from the rostrum in an early piece of self-publicising for which he has not forgiven her.

He dislikes the Tebbit style and thinks his attack on the Alliance as crypto socialists badly misjudged (it has been dropped). He himself yearns for the 'old' Labour Party, where MPs of his generation shared common assumptions, especially on defence. He can wax as lyrical as the late Harold Macmillan about the miners ('The best men in the world') — not surprisingly, since the Whitelaw fortunes owe a good deal to the labour of miners in the William Blair pits in the south of Scotland.

He will stay on after the next election, but only for a year or two (he is 69 in June): he thinks his fellow ennobled and long-serving cabinet colleague, Lord Hailsham (80 in October), has stayed on far too long. He does not expect to see the death of socialism in his lifetime, and gives the impression of not wishing to see it either: like Stanley Baldwin, to whom he is sometimes compared, his view of socialism is simply that of the other chaps, who get their turn sometimes.

Why does this man stay on — and why is he compromising his principles and his political life by remaining so loyal to a Prime Minister whose conservatism is so different from his own?

Loyalty is a large part of it, but only a part of it. Unlike Edward Heath, whose Northern Ireland Secretary he was, he is not hugely attached to ideological conservatism of any kind, left or right: this detachment has allowed him to become a non-partisan figure within the Tory ranks and even outside of them. Lacking ideology, he has been able to provide the bluff ballast to Thatcherism, to chair the most contentious of Cabinet committees (where departmental claims are adjudicated) and to co-ordinate government action on Aids.

Impossible to dislike personally, his role in underpinning the government has been and will be a terribly important one. He will feel some qualms, but comfortable ones: the fissure in the Conservative Party is not, after all, unbridgeable while Willie is about, saying 'Splendid, splendid', pouring the oil and able to turn himself from an October to June man as the occasion demands. ●

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PETER KELLNER

Must Labour lose? Olive and Percy argue it out

LABOUR HAS had a disastrous fortnight. Or has it? A few days ago I ran into my old party friends, the ever optimistic Olive Optima and Percy Potter, the perennial pessimist. They were arguing in a more animated fashion than usual.

P: I've never been as gloomy as this, Olive — not since 1983.

O: Nonsense, Percy, you're always pessimistic: you even thought Tony Benn would lose the Chesterfield by-election.

P: But there's a damn sight more reason to be pessimistic now than there was then. Labour's struggling to hold its support at 30 per cent in the polls. It looks to me as if we shall come third in votes at the next election, Mrs Thatcher will win her third term, and we shall be lucky if Labour survives as a coherent political force to fight the election after that. Now you've never heard me say that before, have you?

O: No, I haven't. That's because you have never talked such rot before. Labour still has a good chance of winning the election. But we won't if everyone is as defeatist as you, Percy.

P: It's not defeatism, Olive, it's realism. Labour's at 30 per cent now. Do you realise that the party has never, in our lifetimes, increased its support during a general election campaign. You're asking for a miracle to expect Labour to make up that much ground by June.

O: Why June?

P: Because the papers say so.

O: I thought you believed the capitalist press told lies all the time.

P: Not all the time, only when they write about the Labour Party and the unions and Princess Di.

O: Look, I agree we couldn't win a June election. But we might not have to. What we need to do is win the kind of support in the local elections that will frighten Thatcher off a summer election. Then we will have until the autumn to put our house in order.

P: I still don't see how we climb from 30 to 38 per cent, even if we do have another six months.

O: For a start, we have Neil Kinnock —

P: Neil bloody Kinnock! You must be joking! He's a one-man disaster area.

O: You cannot be serious, Percy.

P: I have never been more serious. Did you see him on *Weekend World* on Sunday?

O: Yes I did. He came across rather well I thought. He gave clear answers, showed he had firm convictions and didn't allow that frightful Matthew Parris to prevent him saying what he wanted to say.

P: We can't have been watching the same programme. In the one I saw, he was evasive and bad-tempered. He ducked the hard questios about Labour's relations with the unions. Then, towards the end of the interview, he committed the unforgivable sin of getting into a silly argument with Parris when both men kept on talking over each other.

O: That was Parris's fault.

P: Maybe it was, but politicians should *never* get into those kinds of scraps. They should stay cool and polite — and complain to the programme's editor afterwards.

O: I don't see why they should behave like that. If interviewers behave badly, politicians have a right to answer back.

P: Yes, of course they have a right. But this has nothing to do with rights. We are talking about politics. The important thing is not whether Kinnock was justified, which he was, but whether he was wise, which he wasn't. If the voters see a potential Prime Minister losing his rag in a TV studio, they are going to wonder whether he can be trusted to keep cool enough in office.

> ***'This has nothing to do with rights. We are talking about politics'***

O: Even if it wasn't Kinnock's finest hour nobody will remember in six weeks or six months' time how he performed in a single interview. Hardly anyone watches *Weekend World* anyway.

P: That's not the point. Politicians don't go on *Weekend World* to be seen by the viewers. They go on to be seen by other politicians and by journalists. They are looking for short-term headlines and, in the longer term, a shift in the climate of opinion. After last Sunday, I'd say Kinnock's climate is pretty stormy. And quite a few of Monday's papers told their readers that he'd made a fool of himself.

O: I still say it's a storm in a tea-cup.

P: Like Greenwich?

O: In a way: people don't go round in the pubs and the buses saying 'look at how badly Labour did in Greenwich'. For all but the most fevered election-watchers, Greenwich has been forgotten.

P: But its effects haven't. It was the Greenwich by-election that prompted the latest rise in Alliance support. The fact that the cause has been forgotten doesn't matter. It's the consequences that we have to live with. And the consequence of Greenwich is that Labour looks like a loser that can't keep its extremists in check, while the Alliance looks like it's on the move. Those are the images that survive, and those are the images that count. It's the same with Moscow.

O: What do you mean?

P: I guess voters will soon forget all the things they saw on TV last week. But the image of the iron lady acting on the world stage will remain.

O: Nonsense. It's a short-term distraction from domestic issues like jobs, hospitals, schools and housing. You mark my words, as soon as voters start thinking about those things again, Labour will start climbing again, and the Tories will be back below 40 per cent.

P: That's as may be, Olive, but it still looks like a Tory victory to me. If they end up with, say 38 per cent and we only win 32, then the Tories will still win outright, and we shall be 70 seats behind.

O: How many seats would the Alliance win?

P: Thirty-four.

O: Ah, there's the flaw in your argument. I reckon the Alliance will win 20 or 30 seats more than that, almost all of them from the Tories. Then Mrs Thatcher will lose her majority, and the Tories will have more problems than us.

P: I don't see how you conjure those extra Alliance seats out of the air.

O: Easy. It's tactical voting, or negative voting — call it what you will. There's a clutch of people who want the Tories out and are willing to vote for whichever party looks most like doing that locally.

P: Shouldn't we be persuading them to vote Labour?

O: Yes — if we were confident of an overall majority. But the first task is to kick the Tories out, and there are places where we don't have a chance of winning, but the Alliance do.

P: Try selling that to the local Labour Party in Twickenham or Cheltenham.

O: I wouldn't try. I'm saying simply that voters will make up their own minds whatever we do, and the Alliance will sweep up most of the anti-Tory vote in a few dozen seats where they can win and we can't.

P: If all that's true, shouldn't it help us in our target seats?

O: Indeed it might. The trouble is that where our vote is squeezed it will go mostly to the Alliance, but where the Alliance is squeezed, the Tories might also gain.

P: What price your anti-Thatcher majority, then?

O: I never said that all Alliance supporters were anti-Thatcher, only that there are some who will cast their votes as efficiently as possible.

P: It still sounds pretty rum to me, Olive. Shouldn't you be preaching the case for a majority Labour government, and forget all this nonsense about tactical and negative voting?

O: I may be optimistic, Percy, but I'm not *that* optimistic. □

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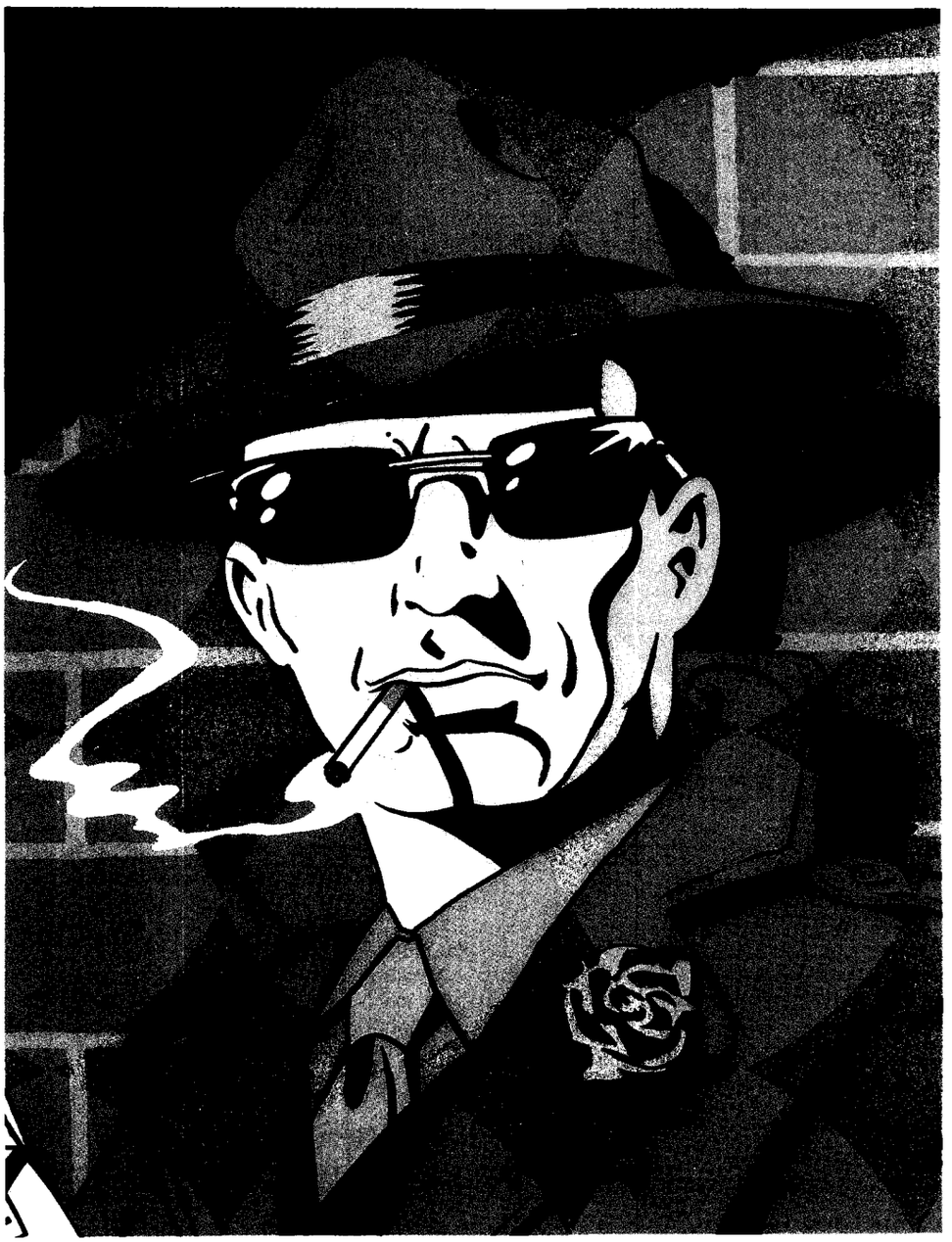
Model rules for socialists under cover

The US administration conspired against its own citizens to supply arms to Iran. MI5 stands charged with conducting covert operations against the Prime Minister of the day. The government refuses to give details on the Zircon spy satellite, but orders raids on those who try to find out. Yes — but would a government of the left be any better? Thriller writer* KEN FOLLETT *reports



HOW SHOULD a Labour Prime Minister handle covert operations? Some socialists would say he should reject all such operations out of hand, on the grounds that secrecy is inherently undemocratic. The American Civil Liberties Union (of which more in a moment) takes this view and campaigns for the abolition of all covert operations by the United States. But it is a view which does not generally appeal to politicians and if Neil Kinnock is an exception I'll eat my hat.

Of course, a socialist Prime Minister might not have much use for the secret agents at his disposal. Secret services are always politically conservative, the KGB as much as MI6. If ordered to carry out a covert operation in support of a radical policy — for example, the destabilisation of the South African regime — they would leak it or bungle it some other way.

Nevertheless it is possible to dream up a scenario in which a Labour government and a conservative secret service might be in accord on the need for a covert operation. Imagine this: in a Southern African state there is a military coup inspired and financed by Pretoria. The puppet regime rules by torture, judicial murder and massacre. The rebels coalesce around an appalling Idi Amin-type character. The head of MI6 comes to Neil Kinnock with a scheme to depose the puppet regime and install a moderate Liberal government led by an internationally-respected elder statesman currently in jail.

Given agreement on ends, the means are still problematical for a Labour Prime Minister, especially one with a passionate personal commitment to democratic methods. How could he reconcile secrecy with democracy?

Rules for spying

The American Civil Liberties Union, in a recent memorandum*, sets out five rules which are supposed to govern the US President's handling of covert operations. The rules emerged by consensus after Watergate, says ACLU, and were violated by Reagan during the Irangate fiasco.

Although the ACLU is against all covert operations, it believes that adherence to the five rules would minimise the undemocratic nature of such operations. At the very least, the rules — suitably adapted to the British system — provide a good starting point for discussion.

Rule One is that the covert operation must be consistent with a government policy known to the public and supported by Parliament. There are several arguments for this. One is simple democracy. There may be a good reason why we cannot be told about some action that is being taken on our behalf; but the action should obviously be one which we would approve of if we did know about it.

Another argument is practical. Cloak-and-dagger stuff may conceivably provide useful support for policies which are being pursued by other means, but secret agents on their own rarely achieve much, contrary to the fantasies created by us thriller-writers. Worse still, a covert operation that is in conflict with known government policy is likely to be leaked, causing the failure of the operation, the embarrassment of the government,

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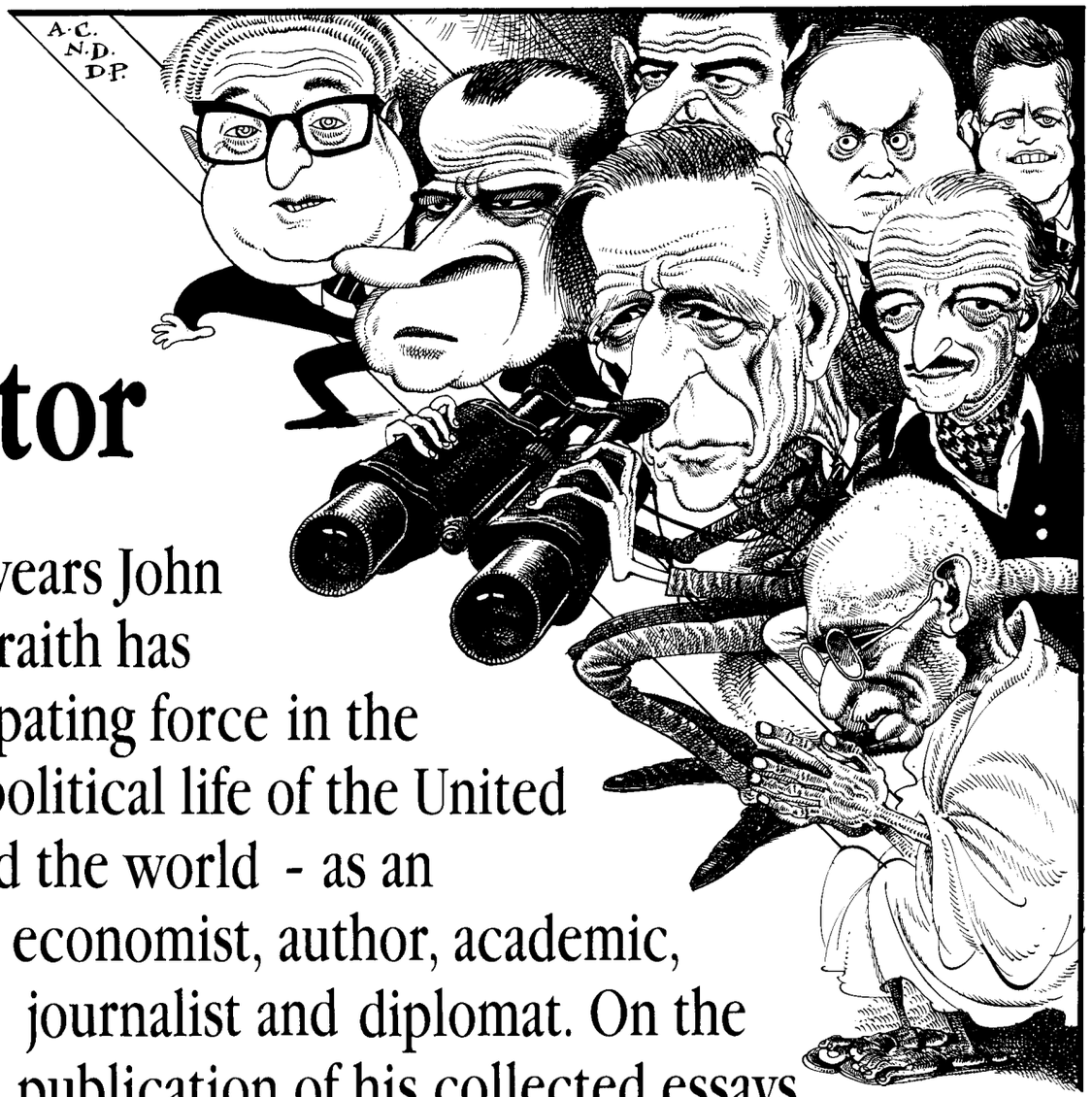
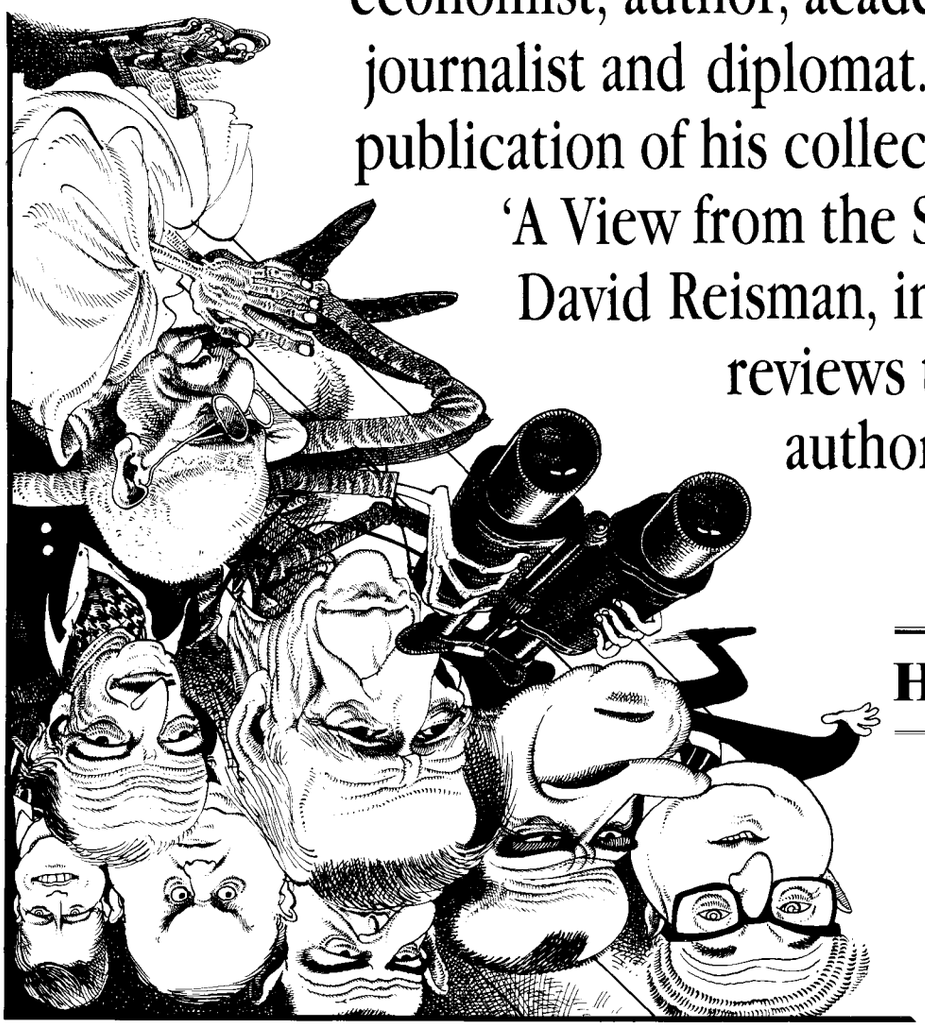
The Player as Spectator



For over fifty years John Kenneth Galbraith has been a participating force in the cultural and political life of the United States - indeed the world - as an economist, author, academic, journalist and diplomat. On the publication of his collected essays 'A View from the Stands', David Reisman, in this week's THES, reviews the life of the author, the life of a player as well as an observer.



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and possibly the death of the secret agents.

Rule Two is that a full internal debate must be conducted, with professionals participating, before a covert operation is approved. Secret-agent capers are dangerously romantic. Within a small group of excited people the snags can easily be overlooked or dismissed. Independent review is the antidote. The Army should cast a baleful eye over anything cooked up by MI6 and vice versa.

Rule Three says that covert operations should not be deniable. The spooks themselves will fight against this one, for deniability is part of their creed. If an operation goes wrong and becomes public they want to be able to blame the lowest-ranking operatives involved, and insist that the whole thing had minimal or no official approval. So they like to work in such a way that later investigation will not easily reveal areas of responsibility or chains of command.

> ***'Rule One is that the covert operation must be consistent with a government policy known to the public and supported by Parliament. There are several arguments for this. One is simple democracy. There may be a good reason why we cannot be told about some action that is being taken on our behalf; but the action should obviously be one we would oppose'***

This dishonest practice has less to do with national security than with rear-covering by bureaucrats. Once a secret operation is blown the damage to national security is done, and deniability only serves to obscure the question of who is to blame. A socialist government should be ready to take responsibility for its secret actions and defend them once they are no longer secret.

Rule four: A parliamentary committee should be notified in advance and given the opportunity to comment on any major covert operation. This makes the whole business democratic and would also put a brake on the more harebrained schemes.

The rule would of course be resisted fiercely by the intelligence professionals on the grounds that it endangers secrecy. There is no denying that they have an argument here. However, democracy always requires some sacrifice in efficiency. Moreover, the security problem could be minimised with careful precautions: a small committee, a secure meeting-place, secret meetings, and so on.

Interestingly enough, this rule is law in the United States. However, it is weakened by a provision that some covert actions are too sensitive for prior notification. Nevertheless, the President is required to inform the committees afterwards 'in a timely fashion'.

The rule thus enfeebled may not be entirely worthless. The thought of having to explain an operation to a sceptical committee, even after it is all over, would probably be a deterrent to loony capers. At any rate Reagan never summoned the nerve to tell Congressional intelligence committees about Irangate.

Whether the committee should be able to veto a covert operation is a matter for debate. The more power it has, the more likely the committee is to be bypassed. But even without a formal veto it would have the last-resort option of preventing an operation by publicising it.

Rule Five is that covert operations should not break the law of the land. This seems obvious to ordinary citizens, but to intelligence professionals it is unreasonable. The citizens are right. The head of MI5 has no more right to burgle houses than any common villain. And there is more to it than that. If we permit secret agents to break the laws against burglary and assault, how shall we expect them to abide by laws which say they should not conspire against their own Prime Minister?

Spying with honour

Finally, it is instructive to see how the Reagan administration broke every one of the five rules during the Irangate operation.

One: Irangate was *not* consistent with known government policy. Indeed, it was in clear *conflict* with Reagan's stated policy of opposing all arms sales to Iran. It was in consequence undemocratic and unsafe, and highly likely to leak, as in the event it did.

Two: There was no adequate internal debate or review of the scheme. In fact it was carefully kept from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who might have looked critically at it and pointed out its snags.

Three: The operation was supposed to be deniable. Careful steps were taken to hide or blur the President's involvement. What is most instructive about *that* is that the precautions quite failed to preserve the dignity of the office — rather the reverse.

Four: As already noted, the appropriate Congressional committees were not notified of the operation either beforehand or afterwards. They would almost certainly have condemned it.

Five: The administration broke at least two laws. One was the Boland Amendment, which banned covert CIA support for the Contras during the period 1984-6. The other was the Intelligence Oversight Act of 1980 which deals with notification of Congressional committees.

A Labour government contemplating a covert operation might do worse than to bear these rules in mind. At the very least they would ensure that Labour's secret activities are less undemocratic than most. Furthermore, if the operation were to go wrong, the government would be more likely to emerge with honour if it had followed the rules. And perhaps most important of all, if the left espouses these rules, then it can ask the right to do the same; and that just might make it more difficult for them to sell missiles to South American terrorists. □

*I will be glad to supply copies of the ACLU memorandum on which much of the above is based to anyone who is interested. Just write to me at PO box 708, London SW10 0DH.

PRESS FREEDOM

BBC to show *Secret Society*

DUNCAN CAMPBELL's *Secret Society* BBC-2 series will finally go on the air in two weeks' time, according to a BBC announcement last weekend. However, only four of the six programmes made have so far been included in the BBC's schedules.

One of the missing programmes deals with the concealment from Parliament of Zircon, the new British spy satellite — as revealed in the *New Statesman* in January. The programme is not scheduled because Strathclyde police, who seized the master and backup transmission tapes from BBC Scotland in Glasgow in January, continue to refuse BBC requests to hand them back.

The police claim that the tapes are needed for their investigation. The BBC have pointed out that the police have no need for two identical copies of the tape, neither of which they can even look at without renting special equipment. Indeed, the only tape held by police which has been authenticated for evidential purposes by the BBC is a third, VHS video recorder tape.

But Strathclyde police have remained intransigent, despite a relaxed attitude adopted by the Home Secretary. At the beginning of March, Douglas Hurd said that 'whether the programme (Zircon) is shown is a matter for the BBC'. Hurd also said that so far as the Special Branch investigation in London was concerned, only the 'minimum necessary' material would be retained by police for their reports.

The second unscheduled programme, called 'Power Play', describes how governments manoeuvre to influence public opinion and stay in power. It focuses on unorthodox activities by the last two outgoing governments at the time of general elections: Labour in 1979, and the Conservatives in 1983. It also looks at how the centre of government decision-taking — cabinet committees — is concealed from public, press, or parliamentary attention.

The BBC says that the 'Power Play' programme still requires further legal checking, which is under way. However, the entire series was reviewd by the BBC's Assistant Director-General, Alan Protheroe, and former Director-General Alasdair Milne in December last year. After the review, Milne informed the NUJ that he had 'now cleared five of the programmes for transmission', and that they would be 'transmitted shortly'. The series was then scheduled to start transmission on 25 March.

But that schedule and Milne's clearances were disregarded last month, when senior BBC officials were told to put the entire series through editorial and legal checks for a third time.

The entire *Secret Society* series was originally to have been broadcast on 17 November 1986. Since then it has been pulled out of the BBC's schedules three times. All the programmes have been remade an average of three times each. Some scripts have gone through 15 versions: the 'Power Play' programme is still being rewritten.

The first of four remaining programmes going on the air, 'We're All Data Now', concerns private and public computer databanks. It will be screened on BBC-2 at 10.20pm on Wednesday 22 April. That week's *New Statesman* (24 April) will carry the first of a series of accompanying features. ●

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Police look left

The Metropolitan Police think the government helps cause crime and is searching for a relationship with the left.* TREVOR JONES *and* JOCK YOUNG *analyse a report which reveals 'the most intense debate on policing policy we have had this century'

'THE LABOUR Party is determined to shake off its anti-police reputation and wrest the law and order issue from the Conservatives'. Not an extract from a *New Statesman* editorial, but from the 'Metropolitan Police Force Appraisal,' a document leaked earlier this week, aimed at providing Scotland Yard's policy committee and other senior managers with assistance in their long-term planning.

It's a document of great importance, affording an insight into police thinking which is revealed to be neither sinister, nor uniformly hostile to the left. On the contrary: it points to the importance of the Islington Crime Survey — the most extensive piece of research undertaken by any council on crime in its area — saying that its 'tight focus . . . is especially interesting to the police'. By taking the Survey's findings even partly on board, it implicitly or explicitly junks many Home Office assumptions on crime.

Widespread fear of crime

The Islington Crime Survey showed that there was widespread and deep fear of crime: it also pinpointed areas like people's perception of crime risk, women's vulnerability as victims of crime and popular dissatisfaction with police performance. The Survey, the leaked document notes, 'shows a distinct lack of confidence in the police' — and then goes on to forecast that 'it can be anticipated that the demands on police by women will go on increasing. Far from being a "minority pressure group", they are in the majority and gaining economic and political power.'

The most quoted section has been that which reflected a trenchant view of government economic and social policy. The report described 'two Londons, with the inner city plagued by unemployment and poverty set against outer London areas which are relatively affluent'. The performance of the Met, it said, had to be evaluated against the background of 'extrinsic social and economic factors' and that 'Treasury driven social policy' accepts 'social by-products as necessary casualties' in the war on inflation. The report underscored the point being made in the Commons, on the same day (Monday) as the report was leaked, by Roy Hattersley, Labour's deputy leader: 'The widening gulf between the rich and the rest, North and South, inner cities and outer suburbs, working and unemployed, black and white, is the direct result, indeed the intentional outcome, of government policies'.

Alliance policy is dismissed briefly — 'sketchy and idealistic': while Labour's far left is criticised for the 'potential threat to inter-agency co-operation caused by such posturing'. The Met assumes, however, that the main dialogue with the left will be channelled through relations with borough councils and the Association of London Authorities: 'The ALA has a police committee which is serviced by a professional police adviser with a small staff. The expertise of the Unit means this particular police committee could become a demanding critic.'

The report dismisses the analysis advanced by the London Strategic Police Committee Support Unit (formerly the GLC's Police Committee Support Unit) that the Met tries to coerce other agencies to 'control the streets': on the contrary, it says that 'future financial constraints as well as manpower problems will force us to closely examine responsibilities which might be shed to other agencies'.

It recognises it's losing the battle for public support: 'The Force needs to speak out with one voice and act vigorously and consistently not only to convincingly refute our perpetual critics but also to prevent some of our warmer friends from cooling'.

THE DISMAL performance of the Metropolitan Police over the period 1983-86 is chronicled with frank detail. The table below, for instance, which uses their own favoured criteria of performance — arrest rate rather than clear-up rate — shows a fall in all the main categories which they analyse.

Arrests per 100 offences

	Apr '83-Mar '84	Apr '84-Mar '85	Apr '85-Mar '86
All notifiable offences	15.2	14.6	14.4
Street robbery	5.6	5.5	5.3
Theft from car	5.7	5.0	4.7
Criminal damage	11.6	10.4	10.2

Whether one uses arrest rates or clear-up rates, the fall in effectiveness seems inexorable. And it is this that the report candidly attempts to explain. There has been no shortage of promising initiatives, it argues, but 'the fact that their success is short-lived and generally rendered insignificant with regard to annual performance, suggests that the initatives are dealing with the symptoms on a short-term basis and not with the long-term problem'. where success occurs in one area, it merely displaces problems to the next. Even the much vaunted 'Neighbourhood Watch Schemes' come in for criticism — although some Divisions have claimed radical reductions in burglary, the results so far are simply 'inconclusive'.

What is the major obstacle to addressing what the Force rather grandly terms its 'Goal'? Divisions unanimously cite lack of manpower as the primary obstacle: the 'Force Appraisal' does not readily concur with this. Instead, it points to the steady reduction of the PCs available for street duty. This is despite a Force commitment to putting more bobbies on the beat and a 44 per cent rise in Force strength since 1965.

'Where have they gone?', the report asks, and points to a number of factors: the increase in sergeants and detectives, extra training facilities, reductions in overtime and the impact of the new legislation such as the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. All contribute to a bureaucracy which simply cannot 'deliver the goods'. Their solutions, within the current constraints, are to increase 'civilianisation': most dramatically they hint at the possibility of cutting back their efforts in the area of multi-agency work, crime prevention and Neighbourhood Watch to concentrate on crime control. That is a complete reversal of present policy.

Social by-products

In considering the causes of crime, the report is both sophisticated and worried. There is no simple relationship between unemployment and crime, it concedes, but unemployment continues to rise and youth are marginalised — not just from jobs, but from the social and political contact with older workmates and the trade unions, removing them from the vital network of informal social control.

In the past, the Force has rather complacently looked at the gross crime figures for London and congratulated itself on the high degree of public support for the police in London as a whole. But it has now discovered the inner city, and the two Londons of the affluent suburbs and the high crime rate central areas. Turning repeatedly to the Islington Crime Survey, the report argues that although in the suburbs it *is* fear of crime which is as much a problem as crime itself, this will not wash in the inner city. There fears, especially among women, are realistic. Furthermore, the levels of public support for the police in the high crime areas are low and in stark contrast to the continuing support in the affluent suburbs with little crime.

Revealed in the Report is perhaps the most intense debate on policing policy that we have had this century. Its extraordinarily revealing conclusion captures the plight of the Metropolitan Police strategists, caught between the critics of the left and a government whose policy creates crime:

> It seems wrong in principle that some of our more vociferous critics are allowed to enjoy multiple bites at the same cherry. On the one hand, the left argues that Government policy has spread and intensified relative deprivation which they argue is crimogenic. At the same time it vilifies the Force for failing to stem rising recorded crime rates and protecting vulnerable Londoners. The Government, on the other hand, pursues an economic policy which includes a Treasury driven social policy that has one goal - the reduction of inflation. Any adverse social by-products are accepted as necessary casualties in the pursuit of the overall objective.

This is fair comment on the evidence of a 50 per cent crime rise since the advent of this government. But those on the left who genuinely want the police to succeed must continue their criticisms. It may be that government policy creates crime but this scarcely lets the police off the hook. It is, after all, general social policy and public habits that create disease, but that does not stop us evaluating hospitals in terms of their rates of curing patients. When the crime clear-up rate has fallen to 4.5 crimes per police officer per year at the cost of £7,000 plus per crime cleared up, the public has a right to be alarmed at police efficiency. The open publication of this document is a step in the right direction. □

Trevor Jones is Head of Islington Police Committee Support Unit; Jock Young is Head of the Centre for Criminology at Middlesex Polytechnic.

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Arms and the waste

Military industry and supporting research and base facilities now comprise the single largest industry in the world. Since President Eisenhower warned of the 'military-industrial complex' 26 years ago, that complex has grown in all countries.

In this, the third in our series on defence, **SEYMOUR MELMAN** *argues that the weight of resources devoted to military research and production is a root cause of industrial and economic decay in advanced countries.* **JEREMY LEGGETT**, *the* NS *regular commentator on defence, interviews two practising defence scientists — who warn of the research community's powerful lobby for an escalating arms race*

"Right, gentlemen — that's enough of that namby-pamby talk about the defence budget. Let's discuss the ATTACK budget"

Military economy vs economic development

A MODERN military budget requires *fixed capital* (land, buildings, machinery) and *working capital* (cash and borrowing facilities). It constitutes a massive, sustained diversion of capital from other civilian or scientific applications. By 1983 (latest data from the United Nations) the United States allotted $40 to the military for every $100 of new civilian fixed capital formation, a sharp increase from $33 per $100 in 1979. In the United Kingdom this ratio was $31 to $100 in 1983; in West Germany, $13; and in Japan, $3.3.

The modernity of German and Japanese industry and the quality of their manufactured goods has everything to do with the higher priority accorded to civilian capital formation in these countries. While official Soviet data do not permit a direct comparison, crude estimates for the USSR suggest a ratio of R60 to R70 per R100. I estimate that for the United States this ratio will equal or exceed $70 by 1988, the result of the Reagan administration's military extravaganza coupled with sluggish civilian capital formation.

However disappointing it may be to the ideologues of military economy, and to military-Keynesian economists, the fact is that the 6.5 million direct employees of the US military economy (civilian and uniformed military) do not produce goods or services that have ordinary economic usefulness for consumption or for further production. Those are necessary use-value characteristics for an enduring, viable economy.

Moreover, the enterprises of the military economy tend to *maximise* costs and subsidy requirements. As enterprise characteristics those are precisely the obverse of the ones that ordinarily spur industrial productivity. For these reasons, and because the expectation of spin off from military to civilian economy has been overrated beyond reason, the net effect of a large permanent military economy is a slowdown in productivity growth and in all-round production and infrastructure competence. The productivity results for the manufacturing industries of the US are visible in the following average rate of increase in output per employee:

1950-59 3.9 per cent
1960-69 2.8 per cent
1970-79 2.0 per cent
1980-84 0.7 per cent

> ***'The managers of military economies guard their power and privilege regardless of variation in the economic system'***

The overarching classic economic problem of the US has been fluctuation in market demand. The new economic issue is incompetence in production. The centrality of military economy for this development is confirmed by statistical regression studies that demonstrate negative relations between industrial productivity and military budgets, military research, cost-maximising, and associated inflation of managerial overheads.

THERE IS a new world economic phenomenon: a class of de-industralising countries which once enjoyed more than satisfactory economic growth. This process has proceeded as a function of permanent military economy, independently of variation in ideology, history, and social structure. ▷

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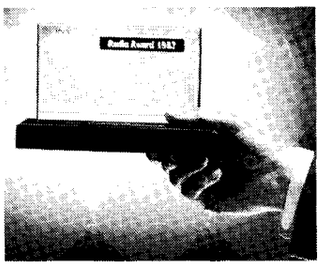
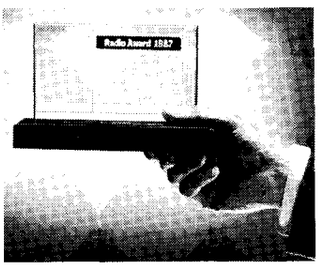
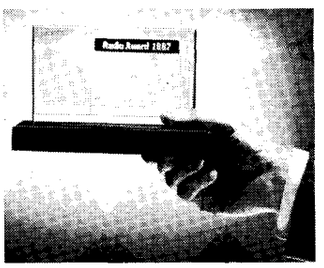


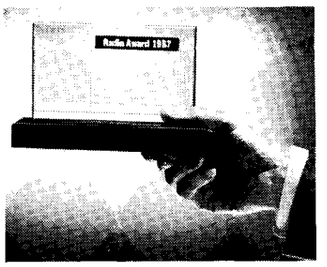
BEST DRAMA PRODUCTION
Mischief, BBC Radio 4



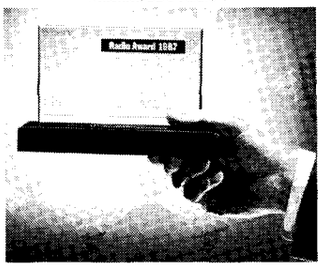
BEST ACTOR
Ronald Pickup, BBC Radio 3



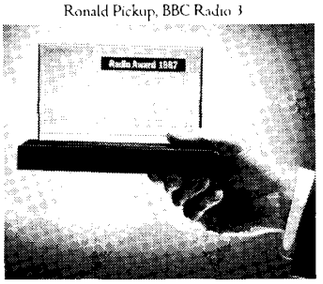
BEST ACTRESS
Billie Whitelaw, BBC Radio 3



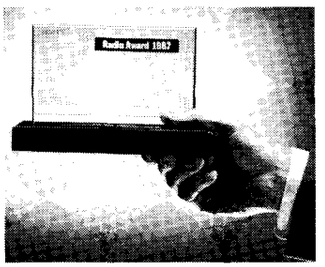
BEST MAGAZINE PROGRAMME
Loose Ends, BBC Radio 4



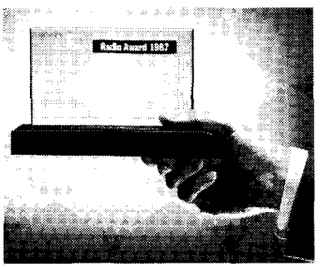
BEST CURRENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMME
The AIDS Plague in East Africa, BBC Radio 4



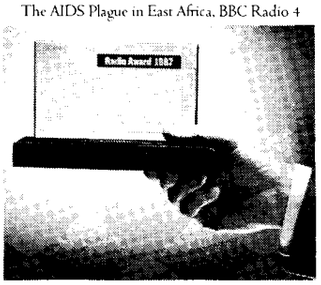
RADIO REPORTER OF THE YEAR
Graham Leach, BBC Radio News



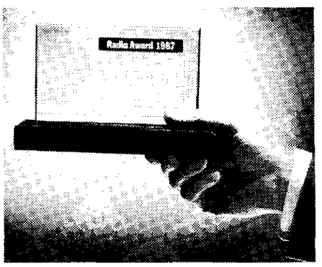
SPORTS BROADCASTER OF THE YEAR
Derek Rae, BBC Radio Scotland



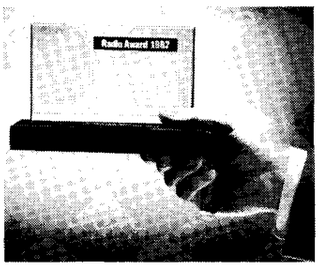
BEST DOCUMENTARY/FEATURE PROGRAMME
Hopping down in Kent, BBC Radio 4



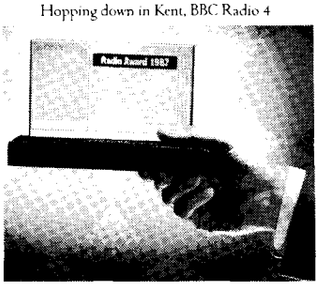
BEST USE OF COMEDY
Huddwinks, BBC Radio 2



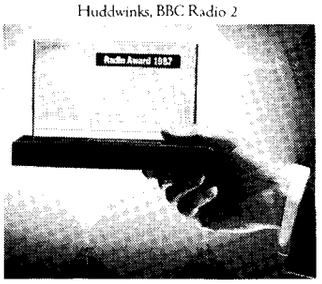
BEST CLASSICAL MUSIC PROGRAMME
The Immortal Bohemian, BBC Radio 4



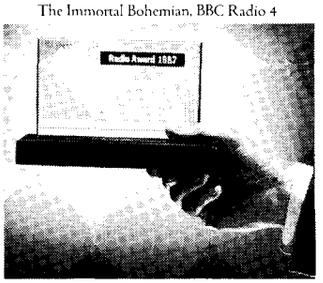
BEST POPULAR MUSIC PROGRAMME
World Popular Song Festival, BBC Radio 1



BEST SPECIALIST MUSIC PROGRAMME
Andy Kershaw, BBC Radio 1

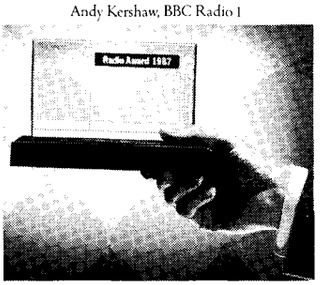


BEST CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME
The Speaking Clock, BBC Radio Merseyside

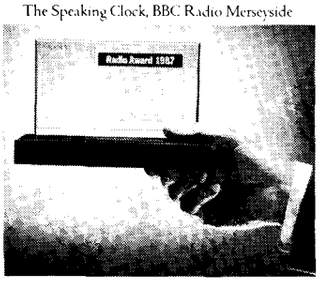


LOCAL RADIO PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR
Barbara Sturgeon (joint winner), BBC Radio Kent

BEST OUTSIDE BROADCAST
The Mammoth Mail Coach Drive, BBC Radio 1

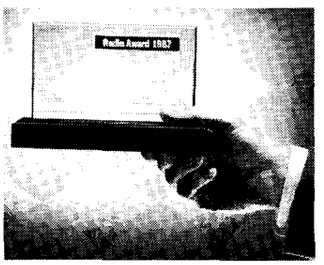


BEST ORIGINAL SCRIPT
The Awful Insulation of Rage, BBC Radio 3

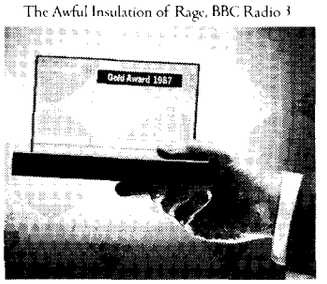


BEST DRAMATISATION
Jude the Obscure, BBC Radio 4

RADIO PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR
Derek Jameson, BBC Radio 2



NATIONAL DJ OF THE YEAR
Mike Smith, BBC Radio 1



GOLD AWARD
The Archers, BBC Radio 4

VHF

As you can see we pick up radio awards with a Very High Frequency. And, at last week's prestigious Sony Radio Awards we carried off the lion's share, 20.

This brings the past year's radio tally to a respectable 56.

Of course, we're delighted to receive such recognition from the broadcasting industry.

But we're even more pleased to know that our efforts continue to get such a good reception from listeners at large.

BBC

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This has everything to do with the fact that the military economy is always the government's very own economy. There is no theory of society or body of experience from which to infer that the special conditions of privilege and power enjoyed by the managerial and technical directorates of military economy would be given up willingly. The managers of military economy everywhere act to maintain and enlarge their decision power — that is, the normal managerial imperative, whether in private or in public enterprise.

That is why deindustrialisation is characteristic of Great Britain and the United States, and also of the USSR, where a private profit motive is not present as a spur for the single enterprise. That spur is replaced by managerial power and privilege that is nourished by priority access to finance capital and all other resources drawn from the wealth of the whole society. The managers of military economies guard their power and privilege regardless of variation in the economic system. This understanding is essential for explaining what is otherwise inexplicable: why both top US and Soviet military economy managers persist in producing more and more overkill capability that is militarily pointless. The presence or absence of enterprise profit-accounting makes no apparent difference.

These characteristics of the military economy directorates, plus the grip of the conventional ideologies that support their power and privilege, combine to make them formidable opponents of the moves that are necessary to extricate each economy from deindustrialisation (short-term) and from the threat of nuclear war (long-term, hopefully). This is true in the United States, in Great Britain, and in the USSR.

In each case the minimum requirement for fresh economic development is a combination of advance planning to convert from military to civilian economy, and parallel political agreement to reverse the arms race. In these, and similar countries, there is variation in the political and ideological form of a common contradiction: military economy vs economic development.

Seymour Melman

> ***'There is no theory of society or body of experience from which to infer that the special conditions of privilege and power enjoyed by the military would be given up willingly'***

'A crucial time in human history'

DR THEODORE TAYLOR, as a brilliant young physicist at the Los Alamos laboratory and later in the Pentagon, devoted his life during the '50s and '60s to making nuclear bombs smaller and more efficient, and to research on the effects of nuclear explosions on military systems. He believed then that he was 'helping to make war impossible'.

DR HUGH DE WITT has been a physicist at the Lawrence Livermore lab for 30 years. Recently he has spoken out, within the limits allowed by his secret knowledge, against what he sees as a 'runaway arms race'. Both men attended a demonstration at the Nevada Test Site for the first test of 1987, on 5 February. Taylor joined in the civil disobedience and was arrested along with 100 others.

Leggett: A recent estimate of the cost of manufacture of all US warheads and delivery systems since Hiroshima is $218,000,000,000 (at 1986 prices). At lot of companies must be making a lot of money out of the nuclear arms race. What is the relationship between the labs and these companies?

Taylor: New weapons are not a matter of responding to a military need, but responding to an idea in somebody's head. The high-tech companies see an idea from the labs getting interesting to the military, and look for contracts. I don't think there is collusion, but the labs and the arms companies are pushing in the same direction.

De Witt: The labs only make the warheads, the rest is made by the aerospace industries. Unlike Lockheed, General Dynamics, and all the others, the labs are public: they do not make a profit. But they do want to stay in business. The directors are opposed to a test ban; they lobby in Congress and sell ideas to the Pentagon. Make no mistake: the labs are strong advocates of continuing nuclear weapons development.

Leggett: Are senior officials from the labs able to influence politicians who make the decisions over *funding for nuclear weapons systems?*

Taylor: Yes, enormously. There are people in the labs who are hooked on testing, and do not want any inhibitions. But there are also people who have doubts. One hope is that they will influence the politicians more.

De Witt: The weapons-labs people enjoy very great influence with members of Congress and the higher levels of the US government, and they always have. They are the experts. They have long experience of nuclear weapons design, and because so much of the work is classified they are

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— Hugo Young
Guardian 5 March 1987

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almost the sole experts. So they go to Washington to speak with great authority: Congress listens with respect. Their pronouncements are of course couched in scientific and technical language which goes over the heads of the politicians, and there is little peer review of what they say. This is very unfortunate, because the directors seem to be being objective, but are in fact promoting their desire for ongoing weapons development. This is one of the real defects of our system. We must have other scientifically trained experts to assess what the weapons-labs people say.

Leggett: How do you compare the decision-making processes, and accountability, of the officials involved in acquisition of nuclear weapons systems in the US, compared to what you know of the British system?

Taylor: Many fewer people in the UK are equipped by virtue of experience to look at nuclear military policy. We have had more people involved, and because there are now quite a number of people who are disaffected with US nuclear military policy — but who also know a lot about what goes on — we are able to put up more opposition.

De Witt: In the US, we have a Freedom of Information Act and open Congressional Testimony. You people seem to be caught up in secrecy to an extent far beyond that which we have in the US. In the US, of course, our weapons designs are classified. But that classification is governed by a law, the Atomic Energy Act, which allows the open discussion of nuclear weapons design *policies* — even by people such as myself. I cannot discuss technical details, but I am able to take written statements supplied to Congress by weapons-labs leaders and openly criticise them. This raises the level of debate and accountability. In Britain you have the Official Secrets Act which effectively cuts off that debate. That is, I believe, very harmful in the long run.

Leggett: The Soviet leader has put forward a plan to rid the world of nuclear weapons by the year 2000. In your experience of nuclear weaponry, do you think that is that feasible?

Taylor: Yes, I do. Here I depart from most of my arms control colleages, but I am angry at the almost total lack of response to the Gorbachev proposals. We have to ask not what abolition looks like *now*, but what will it look like when we get to a world with 90 per cent cuts. And we really have to move: I don't think we have much time.

De Witt: I think it is highly improbable. After agreeing with a test ban treaty, we could feasibly reduce to 10 per cent of present levels by the year 2,000. To go to zero presents serious problems, including the question of small countries who might have the bomb. Israel already has a stockpile, and then you have Pakistan, and even Iran, to consider. But the present nuclear arsenals are *enormously* too large. Once the superpowers get into the pattern of reducing, I believe they could get to a hundred or so weapons per side, for deterrence only. When and if that happens the threat of nuclear war will have receded enormously. Further barriers to nuclear war could be built up, so that in the next century the whole nuclear weapons business will just fade out of existence. The time for it to happen is the next two decades: it is a crucial time in human history. ●

MEDIA

The accountant's gamble

John Ellis

LAST WEEK, the BBC's new Director-General, Michael Checkland, announced his far-reaching programme of reform for the BBC. No one seems to have noticed. Perhaps it was the circumstances of the announcement, made at a conference organised by the Independent Programme Producers' Association to discuss independent access to the BBC, that confused the press.

The press does not understand the economics of broadcasting, and Michael Checkland, an accountant as we are tired of hearing, made a statement about the economics of TV. He committed the BBC to taking 600 hours of independent production in 1990, worth over £20 million, enough for quality rather than cheap product. As calculators were busy working this out, he announced that the BBC would move to a new method of costing its own internal productions. After a three-year transition period, the BBC would achieve full-cost budgeting on all its productions.

Former BBC hands who now run the independent companies were amazed. For this represents a fundamental change for the BBC. Until now a BBC 'budget' for a production has been a flimsy form mostly concerned with the internal allocation of man(*sic*)-power and machinery in terms of hours of use. The 'cash' column of the budget, dwarfed in the corner of the sheet, concerns itself only with the money to be paid outside the corporation: to freelancers, actors and technicians alike, and for items like costumes that the BBC cannot provide.

The system dates from the days of monopoly broadcasting, before any market in resources. It means that BBC producers never have the ability to judge where their budgets would be best spent (since they are not spending *money* but equipment-hours), and management cannot arrange for efficient resource use with the producers' co-operation.

All kinds of inefficiencies and corruptions can creep in. A full-cost budget, where everything is priced, allows each producer to make best use of available resources within the overall cash budget. Independents do this as a matter of course, but the measure of how great a change in BBC attitude this is can be found in the implementation period: three years.

THE IMPLICATIONS are far wider than simple internal efficiency. Once BBC facilities are used on a price-per-head basis, they could easily be made available on the open market to whoever wants to pay for them. This is simply not possible at the moment; the BBC have no idea what to charge, as the odd American producer wanting to use their idle resources has found.

In the medium-term, then, the BBC's excellent regionally based resources, which tend to be under-used, could become the nucleus for production all over the country: not only for broadcasting but also for non-broadcast products, be they corporate or community videos, pop promos or programmes for export. This would be the real death-knell to London's virtual monopoly of high-quality video post-production, for instance.

With such a level of interchange between the BBC and other sectors of TV production, it would not be long before the BBC's technicians discovered the reality of being paid an average of 25 per cent less than their counterparts in other sectors. Checkland's gamble here is a simple one: the BBC should be able to absorb the pressure to increase wages by more efficient use of personnel and equipment, and from the revenue gained from their hire outside. For every producer of filmed drama, at least, would love to use the best of the BBC's crews and equipment.

This sweeping reform of the BBC's internal working is bound to upset the ITV companies, whose internal budgeting may be on a cash basis, but is certainly not on a full-cost basis. Suddenly the BBC is showing the way to ITV, in this at least.

Checkland also announced the end of the BBC's policy of continual replacement of worn-out equipment and constant acquisition of new. If the independents were to provide some of the output, he reasoned, then some of the equipment could be disposed of. This was slightly specious as reasoning goes, since the independents will be supplying only around 7.3 per cent of BBC output by 1990, but the move is of profound significance internally. The BBC is short of money for its own programmes (as the current whelter of low-cost studio chat proves) because capital expenditure is eating up more and more of the licence fee income. Checkland effectively announced the end of the squeeze on programme expenditure by capital expenditure. This will make more money available for programmes, and ends the arrogant assumption held for too long by the BBC that it should service all its needs, and be involved in all aspects of broadcasting.

Checkland's programme of reforms is far-reaching, and will produce a dramatic turn-around in the BBC's fortunes. In this sense, the amount of programmes (600 hours at £20 million) offered to independents will function as a mere control on a vast internal experiment designed to move the BBC into a new era of broadcasting. This is scarcely what the government has demanded of the BBC, since 6.5 per cent of programming from independents in three years' time leaves a hefty 18.5 per cent to be added in the fourth year if the government's target of 25 per cent independent output in four years is to be reached.

So perhaps Checkland's brave internal experiment will still fall foul of his political masters (who, of course, respect the BBC's autonomy . . .). Checkland's announcement is only a small step for the independents, but marks a giant leap for British broadcasting. □

John Ellis is an independent television producer.

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Right against NATO

A pragmatic Soviet leader and a dogmatic American right do not augur well for future world peace reports

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Washington

IT'S OFTEN on the edge of a remark that you catch the speaker's real meaning, and it's often in the footnotes that you can detect the real import of an argument. I found myself impressed the other day while reading an article by General Brent Scowcroft. Scowcroft headed Ronald Reagan's 'Blue Ribbon' commission on the MX missile, and was one of the three trusties who made up the Tower Commission. Writing about the current excitement over 'zero option' proposals for Europe, and warning against optimism in the process, he casually admitted that the original 1981 proposal had been made by the United States in the certainty that the Soviet Union would say no. Given that the Soviet Union could no longer be relied upon to say no, the general went on, it would be unwise to make the proposal again.

I'm afraid that reasoning of that kind is becoming increasingly common in Washington these days, and that those who bought in on the ground floor of a Euromissile deal are likely to lose their shirts. Three things make me think this.

First, remember Ronald Reagan's reception of Neil Kinnock's modified policy on the relationship between missiles and negotiations. Peering dimly at cue-cards which were certainly supplied to him by others, the President announced that all notions of build-down would undercut the United States' bargaining position at Geneva. Since nobody knows what the United States' bargaining position at Geneva may be, this suggests that whatever it is, it is incompatible with the removal of cruise and Pershing missiles. This is more sobering than the discovery that Reagan can't tell Denis Healey from the British ambassador (though it must be admitted that this is a poor return for Healey's 40 years of fealty to the Atlantic alliance.)

Second, we have a new contribution from the pen of Henry Kissinger. Kissinger is still trying to work his passage back, and does not go into print on sensitive matters unless he has first tested the wind and the temperature with some care. His article was headed 'Forget the zero option'. It warned George Shultz, the Secretary of State, in very strident tones to watch his step while he was in Moscow.

It stated plainly that a Euromissile deal would undercut America's friends, such as Margaret Thatcher, who had been asked to make great political sacrifices in the Reagan cause. It recalled, rather as Scowcroft had, that the champion of the 1981 scheme had been Richard Perle. Kissinger hardly needed to say what he then said, which was 'Obviously, neither Perle nor Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger was heartbroken (or surprised) when their proposal was rejected by the Soviets'. No indeed. Kissinger ended his piece by saying, 'be thoughtful about what you propose. The other side may accept it.'

The third reason for pessimism is the rapid rate at which contracts for Star Wars research are being awarded. Even though the Senate is still putting up a rather ragged opposition to the idea, Reagan never misses a chance to reassure his 'true believer' audiences that SDI is no bargaining chip. And money for 'research' (falsely distinguished from 'development', as 'humanitarian' aid to the contras used to be distinguished from 'lethal') is being handed out lavishly. There is loose talk from the Pentagon about deployment of a space shield well ahead of schedule.

This means that, at the very best, a modest reduction agreement on Euromissiles would be flourished as proof of sincerity on arms control while the next stage of the arms race got into high gear. That would be scant consolation for Europe, which would not be under the fabulous astrodome even if it were feasible to construct it.

'Disloyal' Europe

In parallel with these depressing developments is the rise in right-wing unilateralism. This is a cyclical phenomenon, which arises at times like the present when there is recession in the American economy and evidence of European independent-mindedness. All of a sudden at such times, there is less talk of Marshall aid and more growling about ingratitude and disloyalty.

A new book has appeared, entitled *How NATO weakens the West.* Written by a second-rate academic at the conservative Hoover Institute named Melvyn Krauss, it is doing very well among right-wing reviewers and on the think-tank circuit. Krauss argues that the nations of Western Europe are sodden with appeasement and fixated on détente; that they absorb disproportionate amounts of American assistance and that they would only come to their senses if there was a phased American withdrawal.

I went to hear and question Krauss at a meeting of the Cato Institute in Washington, and I must say that the discussion was less confined than a similar one in London would have been. You do not get, on the American right, the totemisation of 'the alliance' that is so vital to British Tories. On the other hand, not even Thatcherite circles are so secure in their assumption that the United States owns the globe.

Krauss notices that strategic parity between the superpowers has made all 'umbrella' talk redundant. He advocates withdrawing any nuclear guarantee by Washington. He also argues for the phased evacuation of American conventional and ground troops, in order to bring the decadent Europeans to their senses. He has no patience with servile talk about 'coupling' and 'decoupling'. Either Europe must defend itself, he says, or drop out of the great *kulturkampf* with Russia.

This makes a nice counterpoint (or counterpart if you prefer) to those in Britain who argue for less nuclear and more conventional defence. The probable result of a Krauss-type policy would be an America consoled by Star Wars technology, a Western Europe compelled to find new money for foot-soldiers, and a few purely American nuclear bases in the more compliant or bankrupt European states.

But, then, that looks a bit like the future anyway. One drones on about American unilateralism, because there is a need to give a name to a process. Roughly speaking, it consists of three interlocking ironies. The current establishment in the Pentagon believes that if the Soviet Union will sign a deal, then the deal is *ex hypothesi* not worth having. The older veterans of arms control warn against any piecemeal 'theatre' deals because such deals may endanger the overarching design of strategic defence or SDI.

And the hard right calls for the end of sentimentality about Europe altogether. One does not have to be soppy about Gorbachev to realise this much: that as the casual destruction of the test-ban offer has already illustrated, the coincidence of his pragmatism with Reagan's ideological dogmatism is a tragedy of perhaps world-historic proportions. □

WHEN WE STARTED SLASHING AID TO MANY 3rd WORLD STATES WE WERE ACCUSED OF BEING RACIST!
CRITICS CHARGED THAT WE DIDN'T CARE ABOUT THE POOR IN DEVELOPING NATIONS!
BUT THAT'S JUST NOT TRUE! WE ARE NOT RACIST AT ALL!!
WE DON'T CARE ABOUT THE POOR IN OUR OWN COUNTRY EITHER!!...
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FRENCH SOCIALISTS

Moving quietly to the centre

DAVID BELL *reports on the French Socialist Party Congress in Lille — and finds the party looking to the floating voters on its right*

THE FRENCH Socialist Congress in Lille over the weekend was the congress of unity. This is particularly valuable in a party prone to factional struggles and at a juncture when the War of the Roses, between Rocardists and Mitterrandists for the presidential nomination, could start up once again. Unity is a necessity for victory, but it is not sufficient: the Congress went only a small way towards solving some of the long-term difficulties the party faces.

Jean Poperen, who was slated for eviction from his post as number two to Lionel Jospin long before the Congress, unwittingly drew attention to these in a speech on Friday which was, in reality, an attack on the leadership from the left. Poperen, in a biting if toothless criticism, railed against the domination of the party by an elite (a bit rich this) and called for the right for differences of opinion to be expressed. But even if the party was prepared to applaud such sentiments, the activists show no inclination to move to the left and the party's electorate looks to alliances with those outside the body of the Kirk.

Yet the Lille Congress has to be seen as part of a continuing process. The party devoted much of its time to committees doing preparatory work on a manifesto for the next elections, not to rousing calls to climb up into the Golden Age and pitch away the ladder. The Socialist leaders also opened a concentrated fire on the former conservative Prime Minister Barre (who is a sort of 'wet') as well as on the usual haystack target of the Chirac government's 'free-market liberalism'. This weekend the state TV Channel One was sold off and the government, in lieu of other policy success, is selling off anything which is not nailed down.

The first major problem the Socialists face is their future choice of a partner in government. Left unity with the Communists is no longer a possibility, though the party still needs Communist support at the second round of the presidential elections and in local elections. Lionel Jospin recognises the need to avoid a move of former Communists over to the National Front or into abstention: to this end, a movement of ex-Communists, who support the Socialists, has been encouraged, and a series of actions planned for the autumn. In his speech to the Socialist rally on Sunday, Jospin also rejected any alliance with the centre: 'We don't want an alliance with the right, nor an alliance with the centre which is part of the right'.

The painful fact is, however, that such alliances are not now on offer. They are not needed for the presidential elections (which are rallies around one person): but in the longer term, Socialist voters would like an alliance with the centre rather than with the Communists; moreover, the elusive ten per cent needed to lever the party back into power can only come from one place — the centre. Resolute as the conference speeches sounded, no options have been closed for after the presidential election and the problem will not go away.

On the issues currently under discussion there were, as Michel Rocard, the former Agriculture Minister, said, no 'miracle solutions'. Former Prime Minister Laurent Fabius recognised that the period was not an easy one for the present government, and that the rate of the dollar and the price of petrol were not within French control. At the same time, he took up Rocard's theme that the Party could easily slip into fatalism and added that something would have to be done to extend training programmes. Former Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy, who is mayor of Lille (capital of a badly hit area), called it the gravest of problems which faced the country. As Jospin said to the rally on Sunday morning, the Socialist Party has once again to become the party of employment.

> ***'The Socialist Party has not yet begun to weave together the notions of social justice and individual liberty in a new way'***

But the Socialist Party has not yet begun to make its way towards a mobilising project, something which can weave together the notions of social justice and individual liberty in a new way. The party has come to accept private property and the market-oriented society of the West; but although it believes in direct action by, and the positive role of, the state this has yet to find its champion.

The values of Europe, defence, and a nostalgic look at the managerial aspects of the Socialist governments (investment, productivity, savings and growth) do not mark them out clearly enough from the right. Fabius put the point with his habitual eloquence (but he is no longer the Congress favourite) when he said that the Socialists have to be at the same time a party of government and a party of society, a party of the widest consensus as well as a party of debate and of unity. He spoilt the point, however, by adding that the solution would have to wait for other Congresses.

When Fabius suggested that the President might not win the next election silence fell like a stone and there were cries of 'no': the Congress was Mitterrand's and Mitterrand ran through the Congress like Brighton through rock. Forward to the presidential election: with an accommodation to centrist values the order of the day. □

NEWS ON SUNDAY

Resigned to a lot of balls

News on Sunday *hits the streets on 26 April.* **PETER CHIPPINDALE,** *its Special Projects Editor, reports on its already-contentious launch*

NEWS ON SUNDAY promised to be different — and it already is. It is not every newspaper that parts company with its advertising agency three weeks before launch.

The resignation of Bartle, Bogle, Hegarty, last year's Agency of the Year, was prominently displayed on the front cover of *Media Week*, where it was announced as 'a commercial blow' for the paper. In reality it makes little difference. The launch campaign is already set, and is primarily based 'above the line' on television commercials which are unaffected.

The public falling-out between the agency and the paper started with the trade ads, to sell space. The first one, 'NO TITS, BUT A LOT OF BALLS', was splashed in two-inch-high (150 point) white lettering on a shocking pink double-page spread in *Media Week*. It was followed up in *Campaign* with 'THE NAKED TRUTH — NOT NAKED WOMEN', showing a Page Three girl with her breasts crossed out.

Both these ads led to a crop of appalled and sniggering diary items that the worst fears of John Pilger, the former editor-in-chief and paper's constant critic since he resigned last December, were about to be realised. Here was the awful spectre of a 'radical *Sun*', just as hideous and raucous as its opponent, peeping over the edge of the horizon. Within the paper itself the slogans caused great dissension, complicated by the fact that they were construed as sexist by many of the staff. Ironically the copyline was written by a woman, Barbara Nokes.

If the slogan had been 'THE PAPER THAT DOES NOT PRINT SEXIST PICTURES OF NAKED WOMEN INSTEAD OF NEWS BUT INSTEAD HAS THE GUTS TO STAND UP AND FIGHT AGAINST THE REAL INJUSTICES IN BRITAIN TODAY' the argument would probably not have taken place. Neither would many ad sales. Selling space is a rough game, and whatever feelings have been aroused there is no doubt that the campaign has been effective, and brought in a gratifying crop of inquiries.

BBH RESIGNED the account on the grounds that they had received confusing briefs from the paper, where they said consensus decision-making made it hard to establish exactly what was wanted. Much the same sort of indecision would characterise any other paper on what remains of Fleet Street if the staff had any say in the commercial operation.

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And, of course, the idea of journalists working for proprietors like Rupert Murdoch, Robert Maxwell or Tiny Rowland having any say on their papers' advertising image-making does not even arise. More seriously, in both newspapers and television, journalists are increasingly having to grit their teeth and close their eyes to exactly what the point of their work is on the editorial pages.

At the quality end of the market the move is more and more towards the 'lifestyle' kind of journalism, where the concentration is on thinly-disguised consumer spending articles which become harder and harder to differentiate from the advertising they generate and support. At the other end of the market, and in television, the newspaper and ratings war has sparked off a hunt for the Lowest Common Demoninator, where success is measured not in terms of the quality of the journalism, but in the number of copies sold or the rating received.

It is this approach which is blamed for the falling standards of the main news bulletins of both *The Nine O'Clock News* and *News at Ten*, where both sides succumb more and more to a populist formula to shock and entertain rather than correctly inform in attempts to grab viewers from each other.

At the down market end of the newspaper world the same drive, exemplified by Murdoch's *Sun*, is taking papers away from real news into packaged entertainment. It has enabled the *Sun* especially to whip up and cash in on popular prejudice against gays, blacks, feminists and civil libertarians while promoting values like nationalistic jingoism and the Thatcherite 'on-your-bike' mentality.

NEWS ON SUNDAY starts from the other end of the spectrum, with an idealistic charter committing it to fighting exactly the sort of values its competitors in the marketplace espouse (with the exception of the *Mirror* on its better days). Where the rub for the paper comes is translating this into commercial sense, which it has to do if it is to survive. To establish itself and keep going, *News on Sunday* has to sell advertising space in the paper and 750,000 copies a week on the streets.

At the one end this hard commercial reality has produced the 'NO TITS BUT A LOT OF BALLS' and at the other it has led to a huge 'below the line' leafletting campaign aimed at the left in the broadest sense, and encompassing not just trade union and Labour Party members, but radical protest groups like CND. It has always been accepted that this is where the heart of the paper's readership will lie. And while its fate depends to a large extent on how good it is, it will also be decided by putting to the test the conviction that popular journalism, like Thatcherism, has cynically suborned many people's better instincts.

Inevitably, the main interest in the paper revolves round its left-wing political commitment. But there is a danger for those who concentrate on this commitment of exaggerating its importance. Advertisers are less affected by the political stance of the paper than had been feared. Equally, while market research on dummies has shown that readers see the paper as left-wing, this does not necessarily put them off.

Most interestingly, the dummies are seen as being 'female' in character — hardly a profile you could ascribe to the *Sun*. And it is here, outside the narrow field of party politics but in the more important underlying fundamental values in today's society, that the paper's real strength may be seen to lie. □

PERMANENT GOVERNMENT

Whitehall reform

Peter Hennessy

THE SIMPLE assertion that the application of business principles in Whitehall would produce better government has a history longer even than the life of the modern Civil Service. Samuel Morley's Administrative Reform Association of 1855 was built on the premise, as its chronicler Olive Anderson put it, that 'the techniques of government should be but the techniques of commerce writ large'. The ARA, greatly boosted by the scandals of the Crimean War and the sympathetic pen of Charles Dickens, wanted the practical man of business to usurp the aristocratic man of patronage in mid-Victorian Whitehall (in the end both lost out to the classically educated scion of the public school and the ancient university who, using the Northcote-Trevelyan report as his charter, converted the senior Civil Service into the most gilded youth training scheme in the history of job creation).

The business community, 132 years on, is girding itself for another assault on the British constitution and its corps of permanent minders. The technique this time is not the mass meeting in London and the provinces or the populist attack on privilege. It's sheafs of letters, briefing papers and questionnaires despatched under the signature of Sir Peter Parker, chairman of Rockware (ex-chairman of British Rail) from the London headquarters of the all-party Constitutional Reform Centre*.

A January mailshot, under the headline of 'Good Government, Better Business', to the captains of industry and commerce yielded 350 sympathetic replies. Two weeks ago three briefing papers flopped through the letterboxes of the sympathetic captainry — dealing with Cabinet, Whitehall and Parliament — bound together by the claim that:

> The institutions of central government, the Cabinet under the leadership of the Prime Minister, Parliament, particularly the House of Commons, and Whitehall and the senior Civil Service, are parts of an interlinked system, which now shows serious signs of strain and weakness. The system as a whole needs to become more open, stable and responsive if it is to provide the good government which the country in general, and industry in particular, needs to thrive and prosper.

FAR FROM offering the monochromatic solution of putting tough-minded business people into top jobs in Whitehall, the reform proposals of the Good Government, Better Business (hereafter GG,BB) campaign offers a multi-coloured panorama of improvements embracing fixed-term Parliaments, proportional representation, stronger select committees at Westminster, new blood, better managers and less secrecy in Whitehall, less prime ministerial power and better strategic thinking in the Cabinet Room, and improved relations between central and local government.

GG,BB carries the signature of Sir Peter, who is treasurer of the Constitutional Reform Centre, but its political thought and language bear the clear imprint of the CRC's director, Hilary Muggridge and its chairman, Richard Holme, perhaps the closest of David Steel's advisers. Is GG,BB an Alliance ramp? 'Not at all', says Hilary Muggridge, 'the CRC is an all-party/no-party organisation and the campaign has the general approval of all those involved'.

More important than any imaginary party political traces on the briefing pack is the question of what, if anything, it will lead to? The next steps planned by GG,BB are an appraisal of the questionnaire forms attached to the briefs if and when returned and the possibility of conferences and seminars coming on stream later in the year. The other possibility is the making of some form of alliance with the 'Reskilling Government' group which has been working for 18 months under the chairmanship of Sir John Hoskyns of the Institute of Directors again in all-party-and-none fashion.**

The 'reskillers' (of whom I am one) have concentrated their focus more narrowly on French-style *cabinets* for senior ministers, a revived Think Tank, new blood in Whitehall and freedom of information. But the overlap with the 'good governors' is almost total. The 'reskillers' have their eyes firmly on the coming election and have lobbied opposition leaders and Conservative Central Office in the hope of reformist paragraphs appearing in the party manifestos. The 'good governors' have produced a menu of reforms which are digestible, I suspect, only over the span of two Parliaments — and mould-breaking ones at that.

Whatever the outcome — and a re-elected Mrs Thatcher is unlikely to show any more interest in a wider constitutional reform agenda than she has since 1979 — the mere fact of the men of commerce and industry treading with persistence and determination where once only Fabians, scholars and machinery of government buffs trod, is significant. If nothing else it suggests the emergence of a new conventional wisdom in the historiography of Britain's relative economic decline — that an inadequate central government machine and a rigid constitution really *are* linked to economic, industrial and commercial under-performance.

For the first time since the 1850s, sections of the business community are actually making the running in the reform debate. What is more they are doing it in a highly sophisticated fashion that unravels the intertwined strands of the problem stretching from the Cabinet Room to Westminster via Whitehall and without pretending there is a simple swift way of cutting the Gordian knot — namely the wholesale importation of people like themselves into key jobs. □

**Good Government, Better Business*, available from The Constitutional Reform Centre, 60 Chandos Place, London WC2N 4HG.

***Reskilling Government*, available from the Policy Unit, Institute of Directors, 116 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5ED, £2.95.

Peter Hennessy is a Visiting Fellow at the Policy Studies Institute.

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ECONOMICS

Why we can't have foreign exchange controls again

Charles Grant and David Goodhart

THE FINANCIAL markets will severely constrain the freedom of action of any future Labour government. Therefore, many on the left argue, the British economy should be shut off from the financial markets by strict foreign exchange controls. Otherwise, if a Labour government tried to implement an expansionary economic policy, the markets would speculate against sterling; and because of fears that a collapsing currency would fuel inflation (by making imports more expensive), a Labour government would abandon its radical policies.

But foreign exchange controls of the sort in force from 1939 to 1979 would be incapable of insulating Britain from global capital flows. This is because, since 1979, capital in the developed countries has become much more international, and the markets — centred on London — which channel its flow from one country to another have become much larger and more sophisticated. Much stronger controls would not be viable, because they would greatly damage London's status as a financial centre.

Before 1979 there were two principal controls. The foreign currency premium required any UK resident wanting to invest overseas to bid for a limited number of, say, dollars. The dollar premium of, say, 40 per cent over the normal exchange rate — depending on the demand for premium dollars — deterred overseas investment. A second control required British companies wanting to invest directly overseas, by setting up subsidiaries or buying local companies, to seek permission from the Bank of England. They were given it so long as they could prove that the profits repatriated from the investment would balance the initial outflow of foreign exchange.

The controls were enforced effectively, by a team of 850 foreign exchange police at the Bank of England and by the banks who acted as their agents in reporting each foreign exchange transaction. But the biggest British companies found ways round the control on overseas investment: they could effectively export capital by swapping their sterling debts in the UK with overseas companies' dollar debts, and by transfer pricing — rigging prices so that profit accrued to the overseas subsidiary rather than the home base.

One big obstacle to reimposing foreign exchange controls is technical: the group at the Bank of England which policed them was disbanded. If a Labour government took power with a policy of exchange controls, it would take months to train a team capable of enforcing them. Meanwhile, tens of billions of pounds would have quit Britain, dragging the currency down.

Enforcement would be much harder than before, not only because of the expansion of London's foreign currency markets (turnover is now $90 billion a day), but because of the plethora of new financial instruments, such as swaps, futures and options. These would make it virtually impossible for the banks which would act as exchange control agents to discern the underlying purpose of the foreign exchange transaction, for example whether it was to finance trade or to buy foreign shares.

ONCE IN PLACE, exchange controls would be much less effective than they were in the 1970s. Since then, not only have British investors sent funds overseas; foreign capital has flowed into sterling assets. Many of London's largest properties are foreign-owned. Companies like ICI, Glaxo and Jaguar have substantial chunks of their share capital held in foreign markets, while foreigners have bought heavily into Eurosterling bonds and gilts, so that about £20 billion of sterling securities are held overseas. Britain's high interest rates have attracted about £35 billion of foreign money into sterling bank accounts.

> ***'Hattersley's market-oriented controls ignore the role that foreign investment has played in the British economy and the fact that if the pension funds had not shifted money overseas after 1979, the pound would have been even higher than the level which destroyed Britain's manufacturing base in the early 1980s'***

Exchange controls can only bolster a currency against hostile markets if most of that currency is held by domestic residents and companies. Controls could not affect the sterling assets held in the UK and outside the UK by non-residents. To prevent foreigners from selling their sterling assets would effectively mean expropriating them; they would do the same to ours. Yet to prevent UK residents alone from speculating against sterling would have little effect if the rest of the world decides to do so.

Even in 1976, when much less sterling was held overseas, exchange controls did not stop the markets speculating against the currency and forcing a U-turn in government policy. Nor did severe exchange controls save Mitterrand from the markets in 1981. Since 1979, most Western countries have recognised that exchange controls are outmoded in the modern financial environment. They not only fail to protect currencies, they promote whole industries of lawyers, financiers and criminals who help people to evade them. Since Thatcher took Britain's off, Germany, Japan, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and France have dismantled controls. Belgium, Sweden and Italy still maintain them, but they, too, show signs of giving in to the apparently inexorable trend for capital to flow freely across the developed world.

IF WE accept that rigid controls would be ineffective, that leaves an incoming Labour government with the choice of trying to keep the markets sweet, with moderate economic policies, or not giving a damn and ignoring a plummeting exchange rate. The second course — favoured by Bryan Gould — sounds attractive but it is unlikely that Labour would have the nerve to fight it out with the markets indefinitely, given the inflationary implications of a complete collapse of the currency.

Roy Hattersley's exchange control proposals are decades more advanced than the old-fashioned sort. He says Labour will withdraw tax incentives from pension funds, unit trusts, investment trusts and insurance companies unless they repatriate much of the money they have invested overseas since 1979. The intention is to prop up the currency at a time when the markets are likely to be speculating against it. The strength of this idea is that it would not cause a run on the pound before an election: it addresses the problem of the money which has already flowed overseas rather than the money left in the UK which might flow out.

The net effect of the Hattersley proposals would be to push the pound up, though it would be hard to fine-tune the system so that the money — perhaps £40 billion, if a 5 per cent limit is imposed on overseas assets — came back in the right amounts at the right time to keep the currency at an ideal level. The capital inflow might keep interest rates lower than they would otherwise be.

But Hattersley's market-oriented controls could cause problems. They reflect a rather old-fashioned, mercantilist view that money invested overseas is always a bad thing. They ignore the role that foreign investment has played in the British economy, and the fact that if the pension funds had not shifted money overseas after 1979, the pound would have been even higher than the very high level which destroyed Britain's manufacturing base in the early 1980s. Now that the impact of North Sea oil is winding down, it is not necessarily wise to sell off overseas assets which contribute about £5 billion a year to the balance of payments — the same as North Sea oil.

Hattersley says that the repatriated money should be put into stock of the National Investment Bank. The institutions will treat these assets as national debt, and run down their gilts holdings proportionately. The beneficiary will be the stock market, which would probably experience a boom. This scheme would lose the goodwill of the institutional investors, who like to achieve as high a return as possible on the money they manage. But it is unlikely that London's status as a financial centre would be seriously damaged: foreign money managed in London would be unaffected. And, anyway, the institutions are not likely to have much goodwill towards a Labour government. □

Charles Grant and David Goodhart are writers on the Economist *and* Financial Times *respectively.*

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Bevan: the cutting edge of inexperience

An essay in last week's New Statesman *by Dr John Campbell argued that Aneurin Bevan's life was 'a failure'.* **DAI SMITH,** *a rival biographer-to-be, defends the Bevan record*

ON THE MOORLAND above Ebbw Vale stand four huge blocks of limestone erected in memory of Aneurin Bevan. The largest bears an inscription which declares that it was from this bare, elevated spot that he spoke to his constituents and to the world beyond them. As the sub-title of John Campbell's book* makes clear, his latest biographer believes that they were words wasted in the wind.

Dr Campbell's thesis (see essay in last week's *NS*) is that throughout his political life Bevan was in thrall to an 'erroneous dogma' of 'primitive Marxism' with which he had been infected in the South Wales of his youth and that, despite acknowledged gifts of 'rare humanity and gaiety, intelligence, anger and wit' this intellectual enslavement ensured — 'the immense achievement of the National Health Service notwithstanding' — that 'Bevan's life . . . was essentially a failure'. It was lived aginst 'the trend of history'.

Certainly it was lived against the trend of some recent historiography. A meticulous trawl through public records of government and party, supplemented by private papers and the voluminous diaries of such objective witnesses as Gaitskell, Dalton and Crossman, has yielded a crop of political history and political biography which emphasises the essential moderation of Labour's leaders in their quest for administrative solutions to social instability and economic imbalance in British life.

Just as, at the peak of his powers, Bevan was marginalised in both the Labour government and the Labour Party (until, it is alleged, he learned 'responsibility') so he is now cut down in size by a ring of fat and often hostile volumes so that his shadow may not, retrospectively, threaten the passage of those for whom the Labour Party, no longer the vehicle for reformism let alone socialism, must be abandoned for 'the sunlit uplands' of the Alliance. It is a measure of Bevan's continuing importance that his own history does still bar the way. After positive Revisionism comes the mirror-image of revisionist Negativism.

THERE IS very little that is factually new in this study. Most of the detail of Bevan's personal life is reliant upon Jennie Lee's memoirs or Michael Foot's two-volume biography; the revelations about Bevan's battle in cabinet with Gaitskell are now well known, and the view taken here that Bevan's resignation was impelled more by Gaitskell's inexperienced rigidity and Attlee's incompetence than by crazed, ambitious pique is a fair recapitulation of Kenneth Morgan's incisive analysis in *Labour in Power, 1945-51*. To this extent this political study 'couched in biographical form' is straightforward and conventional.

We move through the first half of Bevan's life in the first two chapters and then settle down to an entertaining, often perceptive, account of speeches and attitudes on everything from pre-war fascism to the H bomb in 1957. There is a sharp, and effective defence of Bevan's tenure of office in both Health and Housing and a blow-by-blow narrative of backstairs manoeuvrings in the dismal Labour Party of the 1950s. Bevan is praised for his oratory, for his apparently surprising gifts as a competent minister and, despite a few nods in the opposite direction, for his loyalty. The portrait, however, is always given a shadow image, one that marks the man down as a wilful failure.

Sometimes this is because of defects of character (the petulant prima donna syndrome) and, mostly, because Bevan is depicted as a creature of mechanistic intelligence. Did Bevan read Jack London? Why, then, he must have modelled himself on Ernest Everhard in the *Iron Heel*. Did Bevan like to quote the rotundities of the Uruguayan philosopher Rodo to his friends? Why, then, the man must be Bevan's 'personal prophet'. This crude species of psychological extrapolation from the printed word reaches its apotheosis with the suggestion that Michael Foot's second volume on Bevan is merely 'transferred autobiography'. Naturally, Foot can then become Iago to Bevan's Othello as the latter is led to self-willed destruction (and the pulling down of Labour) by the siren voices of middle-class public schoolboys.

> *'Bevan saw his role – as MP, as agitator, as journalist and even as Minister – as that of a committed socialist within a party which might also extend its commitment'*

In the midst of these transference theories Dr Campbell seems to have lost sight of those similarly educated Labour leaders who might be given a larger portion of blame for the crisis of 1951. What is not to be gainsaid is that Bevan himself, whatever is said of Attlee's government, was not running out of socialist steam in 1951. And nor, it seems, was an electorate who gave Labour a majority of the votes cast even in defeat. It is always Bevan in these combative pages who should have tried harder to see the other point of view.

Reclaim for history

This polemical stance requires John Campbell to offer a running commentary, replete with judgement by epithet, on the narrative of events he skilfully unfolds. The discrepancy between evidence and interpretation is the most startling feature of the book which sets out to 'reclaim him for history'. Such history has the fashionable features of contemporary politicking.

Campbell tells again the story of Bevan's hounding of Churchill in the War, and concludes that even in strategic terms Bevan was often more right than wrong; Bevan's confidence that Labour would win in 1945, even with such an opponent as

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Churchill, is duly noted against the timidity and vacillation of Labour's leaders. Yet the conclusion, in line with the current academic wisdom, is that Bevan had underestimated the 'quiet revolution within Whitehall' (à la Keynes and Beveridge) and overestimated 'changes of attitudes in the country since the reality was that Attlee, between 1940 and 1945, and then again after 1945, was not betraying but fulfilling the historically cautious purposes of the British labour movement'.

> ***He struggled to make the first majority Labour government more than the last gasp of late Victorian philanthropy in Edwardian Liberal dress***

This leap from the knowable words and deeds of the great and the good to unverifiable assumptions about 'the mood in the country' and the relationship of the labour movement to public expectation is quite characteristic. Bevan is allowed to be right in matters where the record is undeniable but his reasons for being right are still wrong. This is not so much the demand management of the Keynesian economists Bevan so despised as the managed demands of politicians (and their historians) to be right because of the possession of a higher wisdom.

The latter turns out to be rather woolly. Bevan is consistently berated not only for his allegiance to 'the idea of socialism' but also for the vacuity of his brand of it; yet when Campbell ventures an explanation of the latter's wider rejection he writes this: '. . . the British public . . . thrives on the dream of unmerited inequality held out by the football pools. This was the sort of human weakness which Bevan was never able to acknowledge. But it goes to the heart of the public's resistance to socialism. Most people in all classes, however irrationally, prefer to trust their fate to chance and fortune rather than have it settled over their heads by all-wise bureaucrats'.

Bevan, who championed all kinds of extension of democracy against bureaucracy, would surely have replied that it depends, so far as chance and fortune are concerned, on your base line. His council housing was popular because it was, in size and design, not left to the lottery of building economics but loaded in favour of occupants' needs. So far as I know he did not then go on to inveigh against the kind of working-class 'gambling' which, however ludicrously interpreted, cannot be seen as a significant factor in the unmerited division of property and capital which the socialist Bevan *and* the apolitical working class both resented.

BEVAN WISHED to articulate the latter's 'resentment' in such a way as to lead on to permanent change. For a time he and many others, clearly did believe that a culturally distinct working class had been created in sufficient numbers in Britain to give socialist initiatives a chance, against all the odds, of institutional success. The Labour Party was, for him, the best available means. The Party was not, root and branch, a socialist one. Bevan saw his role — as MP, as agitator, as journalist and even as Minister — as that of a committed socialist within a party which might also extend its commitment. Dr Campbell does not dispute this so much as the connection between Bevan's intellectual drive and any reality beyond a minority of the like-minded. This is rather like watching a film in a pitch-black auditorium and confidently proclaiming the absence of an audience. Bevan, above all other socialist politicians of his era, declared in word and deed the absolute priority of such connections. It is absurd to allege that he imagined the process was an easy one or that implementation of socialist policies could be effected by some kind of painless ride on a proletarian escalator to the future.

His words of despondency to Geoffrey Goodman in 1959 are almost used as an epitaph, but his contemporaneous resilience, his determined sense of the need to redirect socialist politics is inevitably given little weight. The fact of Bevan's death is then utilised, as in the best melodramas, to seal the interpretative tomb in which he must apparently be imprisoned. This is counter-factual history with a vengeance. Neither the libertarianism of the 1960s nor the 'syndicalist' militancy of the 1970s (both of which relate to Bevan far more readily than the Wilsonian consensus years in which Campbell's SDP heroes fully shared) are allowed to colour such a monochromatic picture.

Personality, it seems, does count in politics, but only so long as it blends in with the colour of all those who have willingly impaled themselves on the fence of uniformity in order to be both socially opaque and politically transparent. Roy Jenkins and Neil Kinnock also come from Bevan's part of South Wales. Which one has real colour left in his cheeks? But, of course, South Wales is thought to be as much of an 'isolated maverick' as Bevan himself.

Valleys' tradition

If, though, the South Wales of his early manhood is restored to its actual complexity then both it and Bevan become more representative of a regional Britain whose working class and whose principal party were in a formative stage. John Campbell's touch, here, is not very sure. The hold of Liberalism was far more than a political grip and especially so in Tredegar (to take one example: it is not true that Bevan's father transferred his allegiance to Labour when Tom Richards, the SWMF General Secretary, was adopted for West Monmouth in 1904 since Richards, in 1906, took the Liberal whip) where socialism was a minority creed well into the 1920s.

Bevan's occasional flirtation with communism might have come to fruition in the more intense conditions of the Rhondda but on his home ground he was, invariably, the socialist educator he continued to be for the rest of Britain until the end. Bevan experienced the conflict *within* the labour movement from the beginning. South Wales did not put theoretical blinkers on him. After all he was aware that throughout his own working days underground, and with great bitterness in the 1930s, his own union was bedevilled by the problems of non-unionism and company unionism. It was Bevan's fellow student at the Central Labour College, Jim Griffiths, and not the Communist Arthur Horner, who spearheaded the recovery of the South Wales Miners Federation from his position as President (1934-36); but he is another South Walian who is too neatly summed up (in contradistinction to Bevan) as gentle, moderate and ethical. Griffiths, a Welsh-speaking West Walian from the anthracite field, had different traditions from the younger Monmouthshire man but, like Bevan, *combined* industrial unionism, political activity and adherence to what they considered the theoretical tenets of class struggle well beyond Labour college days.

IN THE interests of a powerfully sustained argument John Campbell has made Bevan (of all people!) overly rigid. This stems from a mistaken view of the influence of early Marxist autodidacticism in South Wales and Britain (Stuart Macintyre's *A Proletarian Science* does not appear in his bibliography though *How Green Was My Valley* is seriously cited in the text) and a consequent unwillingness to understand Bevan outside a parliamentary or governmental context.

The popularity of Bevan in the country in the 1950s is stated but not given the weight it deserves in assessing his own comprehension of British working-class motivation. Campbell is surely right to emphasise the weight Bevan gave to socialist principles and activity which could be described as symbolic. He might have sympathised with the stand over, say, charges for false teeth rather more if he paused to reflect, as surely Bevan did, that the young, male British working class — up to 25 per cent in South Wales aged 25-34 — were sans teeth, and sans much else besides, before the war which, we are now increasingly told, ushered in the transformation of British life without real struggle.

Bevan struggled to make the first majority Labour government more than the last gasp of late Victorian philanthropy in Edwardian Liberal dress. There is something wonderfully comic in the spectacle of those who would evade reality in the 1980s by rerunning that costume drama now attempting to consign a socialist future to the dustbin of history in which they themselves languish so elegantly. Bevan would have appreciated the irony.

Inasmuch as he confounded those who gave him, as a tyro, no chance to succeed in government, he did re-write history for practical socialist purposes, thereby making his very inexperience a cutting-edge which helps Neil Kinnock throw the tired jibe back in the faces of his mandarin detractors. Since Bevan can only really be reclaimed for history by making him a window on to a world of aspirations, then we must still work for an historiography that blends social history with political activity. Only then will we see Aneurin Bevan whole. □

*Nye Bevan and the Mirage of British Socialism; *Weidenfeld and Nicolson, £15.95.*

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ARTS

CINEMA

Seeing is not quite believing

Simon Cunliffe

Blue Velvet (18)
Lumiere, Screen on the Hill, Gate Notting Hill, Chelsea Cinema

BLUE VELVET OPENS with the camera panning down a deep blue sky, over blood-red roses and bleached, white fence palings to reveal orderly clusters of bright, custard-yellow tulips. A fire engine motors quietly along a leafy suburban street. A man stands watering his garden. On the soundtrack Bobby Vinton sings an airy, innocuous ballad called 'Blue Velvet'.

Suburban tranquility is disturbed by ominous rumblings on the soundtrack, accompanied by close-ups of the garden hose — straining at the faucet, tangled around a shrub, as if suddenly inhabited by a malevolent force. The man holding the hose falls to the ground, clutching at his throat. The hose, still in the man's hand, spurts vertically; a small dog laps at its nozzle; a toddler from next door waddles closer. The camera burrows down through the grass to lose itself in the mists of a subterranean nightmare. Then, abruptly, we are back in small town Lumberton — being welcomed by a billboard and the soothingly familiar sounds of the local radio station.

In the deft economy of this beginning David Lynch offers a structural blueprint of his entire fiction and anticipates for us something of its thematic concerns.

Jeffrey Beaumont (Kyle Maclachlan) is a 'regular guy' who returns to Lumberton from college when his father is taken ill. After visiting him in the hospital one day, he stumbles across what seems like a severed human ear in a clearing. 'Yes, that's an ear alright,' confirms Detective Williams. When Sandy (Laura Dern), the detective's fair daughter, feeds him a clue, he decides to investigate. In the apartment of a mysterious singer called Dorothy Vallens (Isabella Rossellini) he watches through the slats of a wardrobe as she is sexually brutalised by grotesque sadist Frank Booth (Dennis Hopper). Kidnapping, mutilation, sexual violence, drugs and murder. This is the flip-side of Lumberton's suburban tranquility and Jeffrey discovers that part of his 'soul' belongs there.

The essential illusionary impulse of narrative cinema is to persuade us that what we *know* to be an elaborate construction is, in fact, something else. It requires our suspension of disbelief and we willingly collude.

Lynch is counting on precisely this. 'It's a strange world' is the refrain passed backwards and forwards between Jeffrey and the innocent high-school girl Sandy, as a motif encapsulating the central tensions in the fiction: the tensions between the way things seem and the way Lynch would have us believe things are.

The darker shade of *Blue Velvet* being sung by Isabella Rossellini

These tensions are elaborated through Lynch's *mise en scène* — his contrasting use of light and colour, for instance. Suburbia is predominantly portrayed in daylight. Flowers, trees, buildings and cars are in bright yellows, browns, blues, greens, reds. The world of Frank and Dorothy — her apartment; the nightclub she sings at; the inside of his car; in fact, nearly all the scenes in which they appear — are night scenes: dull sets lit by artificial lights, decorated by the darker hues of brown, purple and blue.

Similarly, there is Lynch's use of music and sound. When sung by Dorothy Vallens/Rossellini, 'Blue Velvet' has a set of sinister connotations absent during the film's opening frames. As Jeffrey accedes to Dorothy's wish to hurt her during love-making, the sound effects take on a mystical dimension suggesting the release of the beast within the body, his confrontation with the rotten core of his soul. And then there are the camera style and the editing. These mostly offer a naturalistic visual surface; in places, however, the surface is ruptured by scenes of heightened surrealism, by unconventional angles and close-ups, by apparently 'unmotivated' shots, by an integration of all the above elements. The effect is one of considerable stylisation.

A camp sense of the macabre is part of this. While Jeffrey is being roughed-up by Frank and his henchmen in the dark of a deserted lumber yard, the car cassette player drones out a song. Frank spits the words into the boy's face: 'In dreams you're mine . . .' A whore dances on the car roof. In another example, a dead man stands upright, one arm outstretched, rigid with rigor mortis in the position in which he had his brains blown out. But 'It's a strange world' is ultimately,

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disappointingly, collapsed into a political and philosophical closet — leaving unconfronted the disturbing questions and conflicts raised by Lynch's fiction. We are supposed to take it all at face value, to leave the cinema marvelling at Lynch's imaginative virtuosity, his inspirational imagery, his brilliant juxtapositions. We are supposed to shrug our own shoulders and go home muttering that same facile resolution to ourselves and our companions. 'It's a strange world.'

The view of sexuality imparted by *Blue Velvet* — in particular that of a woman whose pleasure is dependent upon being physically beaten — is loathsome and grossly misogynistic. That a woman who has just been raped should urge a voyeuristic intruder out of the wardrobe and wish him upon her violated body is a fantasy of similar proportions. It adds to a general catalogue of representations within which women's bodies, commodified and packaged by men, are offered for male consumption. This much is certain. What is less clear is the relationship between the way sexuality is constructed in the film and its *actual* reception by the film's audiences. *Blue Velvet* takes us into the cupboard with Jeffrey. We are complicit in his voyeurism. But, in a sense, watching a film is already an act of scopophilia — of attaining pleasure through looking — and here our complicity in this 'pleasure', particularly if we are male viewers, is arguably confronted, exposed and disrupted.

What is more, the stylised excess of Frank's sadism is frequently 'unreal', over the top. In the face of it there is every possibility that we withdraw our collusion and rebel against the tyranny of realism which has thus shown us its flaws. We are prepared to suspend our disbelief no longer; we watch critically, only partly engaged by the fiction, until the camera pans upwards over yellow tulips, white fence palings, red roses, to a blue sky; and the sound-track reprises the mellifluous 'Blue Velvet' one last time. □

TELEVISION

Isn'it?

Hugo Williams

'GOOD EVENING every blinkin' bods. Stavros here, speaking from Stavros' Kebab Shop and Video Club, isn'it . . .' Harry Enfield's broken Cockney Cypriot on **Saturday Live** (C4) is my current reason for staying in on Saturdays. Eyes popping, an eager smile cracking his greasy chops, he assaults the language and his Doner spit with similar wholeheartedness, a joy to behold.

The Video Club is a new addition to his enthusiasms. 'After all, everybod need a video isn'it? You thing to yoursel, I jus stole a vid and I aint got no vid to play so you get down to Stavros' plice. I got in all five Silly Vest films. Silly Vest Stallone. I got plenty dirty vids (holds up a cassette covered in taramasalata). This one "I cut off your fice". I got dirty vids like bloody filthy adult vid *Naughty Sexy Vixens Doin' It*. It's a blank tape but no one complain because they too bloody embarrass . . .'

Last week Stav appeared behind the counter in a morning coat, flushed — 'overcome with emosh' — having been to his daughter's wedding. His daughter is 'five month up the duff bun in the oven club, isn'it', but Stav's son-in-law 'seems like a nice boy. He's working for the community. Two hundred hours I think he said . . .' Stav has had 'a little flut on the Nash'. He's 'seeing a little bit double' and dancing like 'Ginger Rogers and Freddy Starr'. His have-a-go impression of 'Michael Crawf' has to be heard to be believed. It made me think of Crawford's own auspicious debut spot as the fast-talking scooter-riding Mod 'Byron' in one of the 1960s satire shows and I wondered whether Harry Enfield had it in him to travel so far. He gets up-staged somewhat when he's persuaded to appear as himself with the rest of the 'Live' team, especially in the splendid Stephen Fry's hilarious military manoeuvre spoofs. He should stay with Stavros, no question.

The show is worth seeing. Even the jugglers are funny and they have rockabilly bands on. The whole thing is chivvied along at a cracking pace by MC Ben Elton, whose chronic right-onnery just about gets away with it by accelerating so fast it overtakes itself. This week his subject was Greed: the Duch of Windsor, Sunflowers, and that MP who believes in British Telecom shares. Also Gorbo and Mrs Thatch. You'll notice the fashionable word abbreviations. All the cool boys are doing it this season if they aren't in pris. My guess is they got it off senior alternatives Rik Mayall and Adrian Edmondson, whose **Filthy, Rich and Catflap** (BBC1) pushed back the guardians of propriety and good manners earlier this year and went unjustly unpraised by me. 'I was out with a girl last week.' 'That was your mother.' 'I still got a snog.' 'Any food?' 'Only a couple of dirty mags.' 'Loosen my trousers.' 'Why should I?' 'You're nearer.' Whether it will all seem so revolutionary the third time around is unfair to guess: 'I had a terrible nightmare that I was a complete unadulterated little twirp,' shuddered Rik Mayall with feeling.

A man who wasn't very funny on *Saturday Live* a few weeks back was lesser alternative Andy de la Tour, who, like Ben Elton, specialises in points from current affairs, a fatally secondhand marketplace for comedians, unless they are hi-jackers or statesmen. De la Tour emerged with points mostly for bottle. He gets more of these for writing and starring in what looked like a wholly autobiographical play about his life as a — rather successful, but still no good — comic and lover called **Clem** (C4), with his sister Frances playing his mother/confessor in simultaneous flashback. Despite his rather lugubrious looks and Mekonesque dome, or perhaps because of them, Clem (or Andy?) comes across as a boisterous *enfant terrible* with a rather hearty line in chat-ups and self-put-downs, aggressively normal-seeming, which somehow only emphasised the non-fictional aspect of this truth-searching play, flawing it for me.

De la Tour can certainly act; the trouble is his less brilliant dialogue seemed to hide behind this talent. It's okay when they're improvising, as in the high-fidelity, post-dinner party kiss and confusion in the car, but for much of the time the talk seems too programmed by a corny psychological overview of the character, presumably his own, of a mother-fixated, marriage-fearing Peter Pan, which didn't grab or convince this non-Freudian, particularly as psychological insights are doubly unconvincing coming from their own subject. She: 'I don't want to grow old on my own, you know.' He: 'Whereas I just don't want to grow old, right?'

In life, de la Tour is a comic who rarely appears on TV. In *Clem* he is a comic whose agent begs him repeatedly to do so, while Clem insists that he has his standards. Agent: 'You feel guilty about making people laugh.' Clem: 'I feel bad about making jokes when there are people starving.' It's this sort of dicey self-justification that sits awkwardly in an apparently autobiographical play. I mean, who's he trying to convince? The agent fixes him up with a dishy live-in, who seems about to tame him, but after a fun trip abroad — 'Australia was great, wasn't it? For six weeks I didn't think I had cancer' — Jack-the-lad unbelievably turns down the woman he seems to love, to reassert youthful independence, presumably on the club circuit. 'What's so profound about sketches about masturbation?' his agent asks. Despite its slight defects of form, the play rattled along nicely enough and you had to admire the man's guts for *attempting* to lay his character on the line.

'No matter if it's winter outside,' said the Instructor in *Fly Me* on **Forty Minutes** (BBC2), a documentary about air hostesses, 'it's always summer under the armpits.' I was reminded of this truth watching Tom Jones singing 'Johnny B. Goode' on **Live From the Palladium** (ITV). He'll definitely get gored if he plays El Cordobes. □

MUSIC

Ice and Fire

Andrew Clements

The King goes forth to France
Covent Garden

IT HAS BEEN EIGHT years since the Royal Opera last introduced an opera it had commissioned. In the steps of Tippett's *Ice Break* (1976) and Tavener's *Thérèse* (1979) comes Aulis Sallinen's *The King goes forth to France*, jointly commissioned by Covent Garden, the BBC and Savonlinna Opera, where the first performance was given in 1984.

The delay between the Finnish world premiere and its arrival in Britain has been rather longer than originally promised, but if as a result of the time-lag the Royal Opera has been able to stage it more generously, and with greater imagination, then it has all been well worthwhile. For Nicholas Hytner's production, with designs by Bob Crowley, is undoubtedly the triumph of the evening, taking what I reckon to be a first-class libretto married to uneven music, and producing a staging of spectacular inventiveness and pinpoint timing.

The Finnish production, which I saw when it was revived at Savonlinna last year, tripped over its own cleverness. Paavo Haaviko's libretto is already heavily larded with ambiguities and ironies and, by adding another layer, the Finnish producer did nothing to ease the flow of the narrative, to aid comprehension. The text, reshaped by Haaviko from his original radio play,

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is a richly woven tapestry of allusion and irony, beginning in the near future, when Britain is threatened by a new ice age and the King resolves to take himself and his people across the frozen English Channel to wage war against the French, and from there moving back 600 years to the Battle of Crécy and the Siege of Calais.

It is handled with light-fingered satire in a colourful, picaresque way; the sequence of scenes, shaped into a topsy-turvy narrative with moments of broad humour interspersed with sections of genuine, uncompromising violence, carries an unambiguous message: we never learn from the mistakes of history, it says: war will continue to be waged for the most trivial reasons — for personal vanity, selfishness, or sometimes just for the sake of it. The message is ultimately deeply pessimistic, and the ending irresolubly bleak.

In Stephen Oliver's and Erkki Arni's lively, perfectly singable English translation the libretto emerges as one of the finest produced for a new opera for many years, beautifully paced, dramatically cogent and richly allusive. Between them Haaviko and Sallinen have fashioned a text which demands a musical treatment, though the time shifts, the Carrollian toying with the absurd and the inconsequential, require careful handling. Sallinen's musical idiom, a polyglot mixture of modernist inflections with a clear affection for the expressive potential of tonality, handles the changes of tone with a fair degree of success.

The passages which consciously ape Puccini are the hardest to take, though even their use could be taken as ironic in many contexts. The final act hangs fire for the first two thirds, before working to a spectacular and impressively moving climax; elsewhere, the musical rewards are more thinly scattered, and the genuinely memorable ideas few in number. In particular, the generalised arioso of much of the vocal writing gradually loses its dramatic intensity; the ear begins to weary of the strained lyricism.

Vocally and musically the performance, conducted by Okku Kamu, is hard to fault. The singers respond to Hytner's careful plotting and perfectly timed comic touches with superbly finished acting. There's not a weak link to be found in the cast (how often can one say that about an ROH production?) with Mikael Melbye as the young king and Stafford as his prime minister leading the way. The four women, two Carolines and two Annes, are taken by as strong a quartet of British singers as could have been assembled. Donald Maxwell's English Archer, the only sympathetic male role, deserves special mention.

Whatever misgivings one may have about the sustained quality of Sallinen's music, there's no doubt that it contributes to one of Covent Garden's most superbly packaged shows for some time. Perhaps as a new opera for the ROH the very accessibility of *The King* is an advantage; the risks taken down the road at the Coliseum are less welcome here. Though the libretto in particular conjures up visions of a major opportunity missed, that should not deter anyone from sampling the evening. □

DANCE

Treading water

Stephanie Jordan

Batsheva Dance Company of Israel
Sadler's Wells
Astrakan Dance Company
Swiss Cottage Baths

RATHER LIKE the Industrial Revolution, the powerful spirit and codes of Martha Graham have often turned out to be a troublesome if not throttling legacy. It was the Graham aesthetic that fired our own London Contemporary Dance Theatre and the **Batsheva Dance Company of Israel** in the 1960s, and now that the latter has visited Sadler's Wells it is clear that these companies are experiencing similar problems in finding a direction for the 1980s.

Batsheva might have been insisting on their standing as a Company of Today, to judge from the work by young or unestablished choreographers selected for their London programme. In fact, their choices simply demonstrated the uncertainty of their current identity; they involved a safe updating of the past, rather than a brave, coherent confrontation of fresh issues.

Suite en bleu, by one Gene Hill Sagan, is an

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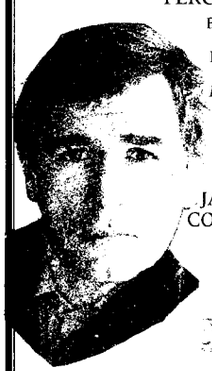

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excruciating muddle of Graham, ballet and acrobatics set to Bach's Orchestral Suite No. 3, with the ghost of Paul Taylor somewhere unhappy in its midst. A lively and pleasantly enthusiastic company deserves better than this work which seems merely to emphasise their inconsistency.

Choreographer Daniel Ezralow is flavour of the month from the USA, recently introduced to rescue various repertories around the world. LCDT has just inherited *Irma Vep* from him and Batsheva present his unpronounceable *SVSPLKT* and *Dogfish*. But his imagery and aesthetics belong entirely to the past, to a school that has long since run its course (Alwin Nikolais, Pilobolus *et al*), favouring props and lights and multi-bodied phenomena over and above the single body as a human unit of motion. And Ezralow's tricks are less compelling than his predecessors', and far less cogently organised.

American Mark Morris' *Canonic Studies* alone illuminated the Batsheva programme. Morris, as usual dryly humorous and musical, has set some 19th-century salon pieces, his response being to exhaust single ideas at a time and with a gallumphing matter-of-factness. Musical clichés invite wry commentary on their dance equivalents, either to make these the entire matter of a piece, like the male following the female in hotter and hotter canonic pursuit, or to subvert them: a collapse or stumble set to the accent that usually signifies assurance and uplift.

The French, who came to modern dance more recently than the British or Israelis, have never suffered a post-Graham crisis and their route through modernism to post-modernism has been swifter and easier. **Astrakhan Dance Company** demonstrate well the vigour of their activity in new dance today.

Recently, Astrakhan's choreographer Daniel Larrieu has been exploring the possibilities of motion in water, but without recourse to sporting feats, conventional strokes or the mechanically decorative synchronised swimming. His work is titled *Waterproof*, part live in a swimming pool, part big-screen video and set to an imposing collage score by Jean-Jacques Palix. For much of the time, this is an sf view of our species, whose habits and appearance have changed in this new dimension. Now we are strangely elongated or expanded, and sinister in goggle mask. We can peddle, or lunge forward fluidly and noiselessly through the water; we can hang or lie peacefully from any angle.

There are moments of playfulness and warmth when the eight performers tumble and stream to the surface or stretch to kiss. Often the vision is grim: scattered, crumpled bodies, or a shoal of corpses floating helplessly; the company in phalanx gesturing aggressively and pacing to a heavy musical beat in threatening procession down the pool; a dancer squatting at the edge and forcing a partner down under in callous experiment. Finally, there is a moving suggestion of release as the company, unmasked and bearing candles, is gently drawn across the water towards a brilliant white light 'off-stage'.

Waterproof is disappointing only in the dryland episodes, that switch uncomfortably from illusion to the mundane reality at the Swiss Cottage Baths and to Astrakhan's vast technological apparatus. Such shifts are avoided in the video version, to be seen on 24 May in Channel 4's dance season. □

WORK IN PROGRESS

Eastern compromise

Naseem Khan

IN ARTS CENTRES around the country — if you put your ear to the ground — you might hear a certain anxiety. What, they are asking themselves, are they doing for the Asians? Afro-Caribbean black arts haven't been that difficult to accommodate. Benjamin Zephaniah and Rankin Miss P have slid happily (and fruitfully) into variety, cabaret, disco. The Tricycle, Riverside, and others have flung open their doors to black theatre (Carib, BTC, Temba and others). Reggae, soca and black music in general have dynamised the overall pop music scene. But what about the Asians?

With only a few exceptions, mainstream British arts have failed to accommodate Asian Culture. The Arts Council, for example, spends far more on Afro-Caribbean arts than on Asian. This disparity was presumably one reason for Stratford East's recent Asian arts venture. After all, they've been highly successful in building black audiences. Given that Newham has a large and relatively well organised Asian community, there is obviously a role for Stratford East to play.

It is unfortunate that the high-profile events that should have put Stratford East's marker on this little-touched area of the arts should have been both poorly conceived and badly executed.

The Lost Ring is a love story, based on the famous tale of Shakuntala by the 4th-century Sanskrit poet Kalidas. A king, out hunting one day, falls in love with the daughter of a sage and, in her father's absence, marries her. This brings down a curse from another sage who has assumed the girl would be his. As a result, King Dushyanta loses all memory of Shakuntala once she has lost his ring and rejects her when, pregnant, she follows him to court. All ends happily, though. The ring is found — as always, it seems — in the belly of a fish, and the pair are reunited.

It is a charming story with enough universal folk motifs to make it widely accessible, and few gods to confuse the uninitiated. Perversely, however, the adaptor and director Jeff Teare threw all these assets away. Instead he settled for an adaptation that lurched uneasily from the loftily archaic to the lamely colloquial, and an acting style that reached neither the passion of the original nor its simplicity.

The cast struggled gamely but it was really no contest. Not even the notable but under-used talents of musician Baluji Srivastav and choreographer Shobana Jeyasingh could make any difference to the outcome. So what, Stratford East would be justified in asking, should they be doing? After all, the low funding figures could theoretically denote a dearth of Asian arts and artists. But this is just a trick of the light. Take just a few steps off the beaten track and counter-community events — frequently unfunded — present themselves.

The dance-drama, *Gopal Krishna*, for example, had all the conviction that Stratford's show lacked. A colourful iconography traced the life of the beloved god Krishna — through dance, music, taped Hindi dialogue, song — from his prophesied birth in prison and boyish pranks to more obviously godly exploits. Traditional and affirmative in tone, it drew a large and totally Indian audience in central London's Logan Hall for its long, unhurried, three-hour length.

On the face of it, of course, the show's deviser and choreographer, Jaya Dheer, could hardly fail. She'd chosen a uniquely popular set of stories, which were danced and mimed by scores of her dance students, from charming youngsters of barely five to young adults. Though the different levels of competence obviously presented a problem, Ms Dheer dealt with it intelligently, using predominantly Gujerati folk dance rather than her own specialist classical style of Odissi.

To a certain extent she undersold herself, and could have been more ambitious without courting trouble. The core of her team — Neera Patel as the grown-up Krishna, for instance, and Rachna Dheer as Balarama — were obviously capable of something more demanding and could have provided a more solid classical centre to the whole shifting panorama. But at its own level the package worked pretty well. The young dancers were attractive; Ashiq Desai's taped music was light and tuneful, and the whole cast ravishingly costumed, so that the young Krishna — especially popular with the audience — looked delightfully like the images of bazaar arts that were flashed on to the backcloth. There was no public funding for *Gopal Krishna*.

Nor was there for Nava Kala, who some weeks before celebrated 25 years of existence with a packed evening of classical Indian music and dance by the organisation's students. More recently, Alpana Sengupta put 150 of her students on stage in a two-part bonanza. The evening did not have arts funding.

Links with Asian arts, particularly those close to the community, can be difficult. The English are confused and upset by community divisions and dissensions, and feel at sea. At the same time, the groups themselves are wary of being taken over, and suspicious of being patronised.

But energy undoubtedly exists — albeit at times tentative and at others self-defeating — and it is that that makes Stratford East's event the more disappointing. For it bypassed the (underfunded) struggling centres of talent and used scarce money in trying vainly to breathe life into a secondhand script. Commissioning or bringing in work from the Asian community itself could have given them something much more valid. □

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Books

FICTION

Bodies politic and private

Glyn Hughes

A Sport of Nature
NADINE GORDIMER *Cape* £10.95

A COUNTRY'S, A CONTINENT'S revolution examined through the lens of one person's picaresque adventure, to some extent personified by that character: it might have been an African *Doctor Zhivago* and, perhaps, was intended to be.

Instead of a doctor we have a white woman, Hillela, who represents Nadine Gordimer's version of the true marriage of white and black and the necessary desertion of white (as it is shown to be in South Africa) for black. The novel is the story of Hillela's journey from an all-white boarding school, where she begins her lifelong reputation for being outrageous, to an unlikely and utopian end as the wife and support of a black president. She is a 'sport of nature', a mutation from her stock of white South Africans — and, it is to be hoped, the first of a whole new variety.

On the opening page Hillela is discarding her schoolgirl name, Kim, for the one that she associates with rebellion. It is her Jewish name, the name that already relates her to racial dispossession. After the boarding school in Rhodesia, Hillela is brought up by not one but two families, neither of them her parents but her aunts, representing two faces of white people's attitude to the South Africa they dominate. Olga, the first aunt, is rich and married to a businessman. She enjoys servants and antiques and would groom Hillela to enjoy the life that most whites would like to perpetuate. The second aunt, Pauline, is a white liberal. So is her husband, a lawyer who, in order to defend blacks, can only hunt for loopholes in laws that are tightening upon them.

One attitude worthy and the other not, maybe; but the worthy cause is not effective. Nadine Gordimer does not merely tell us, but shows us, emphatically, delicately, how impossible it is for the white people to change anything from within the white society that exists. The situation is dramatised when it is shown that Pauline and Joe cannot even harbour a black person in their house as a guest. Hillela's cousin Sasha realises this impossibility — the man's fate is to end up in solitary confinement.

Hillela stumbles into her radicalism, as she stumbles through the whole book, from mistake to mistake, through being schoolgirlishly 'outrageous'. As her aunt points out, she becomes a political refugee because of whom she associates with, not from having done anything. She has sat in the wings. But she ends up in the right place: the place that I (perhaps impertinently) judge Nadine Gordimer herself would like to occupy, as white feminine inspiration and balance to a black-governed republic.

The parallels between, and the intertwinings of, personal, private rebellions or dissociations and socially purposeful ones, multiply cleverly through the book. The same words have their different meanings in the two worlds. 'Support', for instance, when used at Olga's, 'applied to whether or not a divorced wife received alimony for an ex-husband'; at Pauline and Joe's it 'meant that one or both of them thought they had found some sort of sign' for a cause. In one of her many illuminations, Nadine Gordimer points out that an exile is a person looking not for a place to 'live' but a place to 'stay'. But then, at Tamarisk Beach (so sensually evoked) where exiles gather, Hillela thinks, 'those others, on the beach; they have no home — not out of clumsiness, a tendency to break what is precious — but because they are brave and believe in the other kinds of love, justice, fellow man — and inside each other, making love, that's the only place we can make, here, that's not just a place to stay'.

The public and, if you like, the private, quintessentially the sexual, are brought together wonderfully in the grave and forthright Pauline's anger at her adolescent son when he points out the impossibility of her liberal position. Her speech is torn inextricably out of her body and mind at once. Her response might indeed be described as 'hysterical' in the non-pejorative, original meaning of the word: coming out of her womb. The author in fact describes Pauline's physical appearance in these terms. 'Pauline tugged out one by one the crude homemade shafts that pierced her, shameless, as if exposing before her husband and almost-grown children the privacy of the body where he had begotten them and from which she had ejected them into the world.'

The human intimacies and the sexual scenes are

Nadine Gordimer: a Pasternak for South Africa?

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very, very good indeed, as they have been since early books: *The Late Bourgeois World*, published in 1966, contains as beautiful a description of the sexual act as I have ever read. As a primer, too, on African politics, one feels one couldn't do better than read *A Sport of Nature* (though I know too little about Africa to be authoritative). That surely satisfies one of Nadine Gordimer's ambitions. It is a brave book and it behoves any English reviewer in a (still) cosily safe country to be humble about it.

And yet I must say that what prevents *A Sport of Nature* being the African *Dr Zhivago* it so nearly might have been is that there is too much doctrine and explanation pushed through the mouths of those who are not full enough as characters to carry it all. Even the major one, Hillela, does not convince as being as flamboyant and outrageous as she is apparently intended to be. Despite the tender love scenes, neither is she sufficiently real in other ways. Her power to induce sympathy is diminished because she comes over as rather selfish, typically in her desertion, for the last of her men (the black president who is called 'The General'), of the American professor who so endearingly loves her. It is part of the weakness of the characterisation that there is no satisfying explanation of why he, and also an earlier, assassinated black leader, Whaila, compromise their position by joining with a white woman — suitable though this situation might be to Nadine Gordimer's didactic intentions. Both men are surely too single-mindedly devoted to their causes to feel it as an achievement to win a glamorous white woman; Hillela is not even presented as their weakness. The problem, in fact, is ignored.

In the final chapters of the book, the action shifts increasingly restlessly to Eastern Europe, England, America, and back to Africa, largely consisting of addresses and meetings with the diaspora of radical movements. More and more, totally different people express various antagonistic points of view, but in the same voice, and character develops minimally. *A Sport of Nature* is an ambitious book that no one could read without getting a great deal from, but one which falls somewhere short of being the masterpiece it might have been. □

Glyn Hughes' most recent novel, The Rape of the Rose, *will be published by Chatto in July.*

The Halina Award, one of four made by the Photographers' Trust Fund, has gone to Jimmy Forsyth for his recently published photographs of Newcastle's Scotswood in the 1950s, SCOTSWOOD ROAD (Bloodaxe Books, £6.95), judged by the selectors to 'display an integrity of purpose and a photographic innocence and intuition which gives them an all too rare sense of magic'. For this singular record of working-class life in a changing time and a place about to disappear, the accolade is amply deserved and long overdue. Jimmy Forsyth began photographing his neighbours and his neighbourhood when he lost an eye in an accident at work and Scotswood's demolition was already afoot; years passed before there was money to print many of these pictures. They were taken with an old Kodak and processed at Boots, but the prints are splendid; like luminous memories, their meanings lodged in their small, stray details. (Liz Heron)

FICTION

Absolute end

Nick Caistor

I the Supreme
AUGUSTO ROA BASTOS trans. HELEN LANE *Faber* £9.95

WHILE WE ARE BUSY making history, it is busy writing us. Our actions become someone else's text which, according to them, is always history (and may lead us to *Perdition*). The absolute dictator, for Roa Bastos, is the person who tries not only to control all events in his power, but also all the interpretations of those events. So, in *I the Supreme*, we see Doctor José Gaspar Rodriguez de Francia, the first dictator in a 19th-century Paraguay newly independent from Spain, busily 'dictating' to his amanuensis Patino what he intends to be the meaning of all he has done in his life, in order to save it from historians, those 'rivals of moths and rats'.

The book consists of these sessions with Patino, perpetual circulars which are to instruct the officials of Paraguay on Francia's achievements, his own monologues and footnotes from the 'compiler' of the work. The figure of Doctor Francia has always been a litmus test for writers on Latin American history who are trying to find an answer to the question of whether enlightened despotism is the only way out of dependence and backwardness. Roa Bastos presents us with a Paraguayan Molloy, his world disintegrating rapidly around him as he becomes unable to act or to find anyone with whom to enter into dialogue.

That is the fatal flaw, Roa Bastos suggests in this portrait of a dicator. True history is a dialogue between an *I* and a collective *you*, and truth comes from the imaginative interplay between these two, not the all-excluding I — the Supreme. The dictator, who has been bent all his life on destroying any possible interlocutor, is doomed. Roa Bastos himself has spoken of the book representing the moment of climax when 'absolute power wielded by an individual, cut off and isolated from the multitude, starts to decay and turns into despotism'. So the dictator stands no chance of constructing his own definitive truth, and even his death (which he himself has announced in the treacherous poster pinned to the cathedral door) is not Empedocles' triumphal disappearance into the volcano which destroys all traces, but a miserably slow, damp extinction that leaves his remains and his notebooks for the ravaging views of the historians.

I the Supreme was first published in Spanish in 1974. It is a shame we have had to wait for so long for its publication in English, for its breadth of vision and ambition make it important in any language. It is also galling, in a book where the meditation on the power of language is central, to find Helen Lane, a translator who has added another dimension to its value, mentioned only on the dust jacket, her name even being removed from her own acknowledgements.

Roa Bastos is 70 now and has lived half his life in exile from Paraguay, due to the stupidity of that

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country's present dictator, General Alfredo Stroessner. Perhaps, though, we should be grateful to the General; in the intensity of its imaginative powers and obsessions, *I the Supreme* is a book that could only have been produced in exile. And if we believe, as Francia says, that 'to write does not mean to convert the real into words but to make the power of the word real', then perhaps Roa Bastos will have the last laugh anyway. □

TIBET

Han held

Chris Mullin

The Making of Modern Tibet
A. TOM GRUNFELD *Zed* £22.95 & £7.95

TOM GRUNFELD has written what he hopes is a 'disinterested and dispassionate history': no small ambition, considering that most of the vast literature on Tibet, even that disguised as scholarship, has been outrageously partial to one camp or the other.

The root of the problem is that most early visitors to Tibet developed a close relationship with the ruling oligarchy and, therefore, chose to dwell upon only the more benign aspects of the feudal system that prevailed. Then, after the Chinese consolidated their hold on Tibet in 1959, most of the more articulate refugees were members of the old ruling class. Theirs was the version of events that gained acceptance in the outside world.

From this developed what might loosely be labelled the 'Shangri-la school' of Tibetan history. It painted a picture of a simple, deliriously happy, deeply religious people whose unique way of life was shattered by the arrival of ruthless, godless, murderous, foreign communists. The propagation of this fairy tale was greatly assisted by the fact that it suited the interests of those who were at the time running the Cold War. The Chinese, on the other hand, painted a picture of downtrodden serfs welcoming their liberators with open arms. Until recently the only foreigners admitted to Tibet were those prepared to swallow such nonsense.

Tom Grunfeld has attempted to pick his way through this minefield. No doubt he will be roundly vilified for his pains, but he deserves to be taken seriously. Using an enormous range of sources, all scrupulously documented, he attempts to describe life in pre-'Liberation' Tibet, laying to rest some of the more lurid myths and confirming others. The vexed questions which he faces squarely include the existence of serfdom (certainly), human sacrifice (unproven), the role of foreign imperialists (greatly exaggerated) and the legal status of Tibet (complex).

Grunfeld then recounts the tragic fate that has befallen Tibet since its integration into Communist China, including the disaster of the Cultural Revolution and subsequent Chinese attempts to make amends. This part of the book is weaker than the first. Despite his valiant effort, the author does not attach nearly enough weight to the post-1959 depredations of the Chinese: endless denunciation meetings, labour camps, enforced communisation and the systematic attempt to destroy Tibet's unique religion and culture. Only four and a half pages are devoted to the Cultural Revolution, the event which irrevocably alienated Tibetans everywhere from the civilising mission of the Han.

This is a good book, probably the best of its kind so far. In the end, however, the role of the Chinese in Tibet must be judged, not by foreign journalists, academics or Lhasa aristocrats, but by ordinary Tibetans. All the evidence suggests that most Tibetans do not merely dislike the Han, they hate them. By way of proof, one need look no further than the fact that, 30 years after 'Liberation', most top jobs in Tibet are still held by Chinese. Trustworthy Tibetans simply aren't available. □

ANIMALS

Beastly behaviour

Maureen Duffy

Adam's Task
VICKI HEARNE *Heinemann* £10.95
Animals and Man
MIRIAM ROTHSCHILD *Clarendon Press* £6.95

FOR YEARS the animal rights campaign has needed the sort of book that the introduction to Vicki Hearne's **Adam's Task** promises: a book that will refute the arguments against so-called *anthropomorphism*, and will throw light on that seemingly darkest of mysteries: the consciousness of non-human animals. Ever since Descartes nailed his wife's dog alive to a board to dissect it (she left him the next day), we have been bedevilled in the name of science by mechanistic theories of animal behaviour, culminating in the behaviourism of the B.F. Skinner school.

It has suited human animals to believe that our consciousness is unique in both kind and degree, that it constitutes an uncrossable barrier between us and them and gives us the right to do with them as we please, a right tempered only by self-flattering images of our humaneness which attempts to take the sting (for us) out of the slaughterhouse and the vivisecting laboratory.

Students are taught to expunge from their vocabularies any suggestion of words that ascribe those emotions we call human to animals who are the objects of research or observation. Vicki Hearne gives us such an instance of a student being corrected for attributing to a mother cat with her kittens the mental state of 'caring' about them. If the cat's response to her kittens is entirely mechanistic and reflexive, evoked by smell and chemistry, what does that indicate about the responses of a human mother and the sudden upsurge of maternal affection on first holding her baby? We can't have it both ways, although we go on trying: the maternal response is instinctual in, at the very least, all mammals — including us — but that doesn't preclude its being described as caring in humans, nor should it for other animals if we are to be consistent. The researcher who would describe a human mother simply in terms of chemically conditioned reflexes would be in grave danger of that hardness of heart Shakespeare predicts for those who 'try it on the dog'.

Anyone who lives with an animal knows, without being sloppy or 'anthropomorphic', that there is more to their consciousness than reflexes. Vicki Hearne is, among other things, a dog and horse trainer. What I hoped for from this book was a kind of *In the Shadow of Man*, Jane Goodall's brilliant account of the wild Gombe chimpanezees, applied to domestic or companion animals. Unfortunately Vicki Hearne's obsessional desire to justify her kind of animal training to the 'humaniacs', as she calls them, and her passion for Wittgenstein and the denser groves of philosophical and lit crit jargon, make many of what may be her genuine insights inaccessible to at least this reader. 'More matter with less art,' I found myself grouching with Gertrude.

All animals, including us, need some kind of training if they are to survive at all, let alone live together. Usually this is given first by one or both parents, then by the environment itself in the conditions which it imposes for individual survival, then by the social group in which the biological unit may live: family or tribe. In relation to many species, but most particularly horse, dog and cat, humans now provide surrogate parents, environment and social group. The question that dogs Vicki Hearne as an animal trainer is really: how far can you go? If a horse or dog shows an

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aptitude akin to those of human athletes for jumping or tracking are you justified in developing it? Does it enhance the animal's pleasure as well as yours or is it merely another form of species exploitation? Can the rewards of the work ethic be applied to non-humans and does the pupil-teacher relationship of such training reveal what are usually thought of as human character qualities, virtues and vices? The answers to these questions would tell us a great deal not only about them, the others, but about us. If it is acceptable to cross the species barrier with transferred insights in one direction then the opposite traffic must also be valid. It's the semiconscious recognition of this that makes us cling to the, for us, easy and dangerous use of vivisection as a cure for human ills.

Though this isn't the book we desperately need, it nevertheless contains useful anecdotal ammunition. I particularly savoured, in the chapter on cats, the remark of a venerable professor to a young researcher: 'Don't use cats, they'll screw up your data.' Perhaps I don't want to hear some of the names the animals must have for us.

Although Miriam Rothschild's monograph **Animals and Man** breaks little new ground for old hacks of the animal rights movement, it has two great virtues: it was delivered in the heart of enemy territory by a biologist as the Romanes lecture in 1984/85 to, presumably, fellow scientists, and its second part consists of practical improvements that could be made at once to animal lives in laboratory, home and farm.

Such insider dealings are invaluable: especially that on ritual slaughter, for which, after a clearer exposition of the background to *schechita* than I have seen elsewhere, she is able to offer a solution of pre-slaughter anaesthesia. If murder has to be done, let it be at least as painless and unapprehended by the victim as possible. □

ITALY

Hope against hope

Tobias Abse

The Future of Democracy
NOBERTO BOBBIO ed. RICHARD BELLAMY trans. ROGER GRIFFIN *Polity Press* £22.50 & £7.50

UNFASHIONABLE AS IT HAS become to say it, changes in political fashion are often the product of economics. Now that an increasingly prosperous Italy has overtaken a Britain in apparently terminal economic decline, some might be tempted to look at the works of Italian political theorists for answers to our own afflictions. The market for Gramsci has long been glutted and in any case Eurocommunism, with which that theorist was quite wrongly but almost universally associated, is itself in crisis. Therefore Polity Press, showing a shrewd awareness of likely shifts in demand, has sponsored the translation of a number of works by the Italian Socialist Noberto Bobbio, of which *The Future of Democracy* is merely the first instalment. This enterprising publishing house undoubtedly imagined that the boom which coincided with Craxi's premiership would guarantee the works of his party's foremost theorist a wide readership among British intellectuals seeking some coherent underpinnings of a non-Marxist Socialism.

These somewhat cynical reflections about the sudden British vogue for Noberto Bobbio are prompted by three considerations: the philosopher in question was born in 1909; he has had a lengthy and distinguished academic career (largely unknown to the insular British intelligentsia); and he has probably passed the peak of his political influence because of his recent criticisms of Craxi, who opposes free discussion in his own party whilst ritualistically demanding it of the PCI.

The Future of Democracy is a collection of essays on related themes written for differing audiences over a number of years, not the major theoretical treatise or sustained polemic that the rather portentous title might lead the unwary reader to expect. Some of the essays deal with general issues in political philosophy, whilst others are more closely related to recent Italian politics. Bobbio's political stance, as befits his longevity, is essentially more pessimistic than optimistic. He defends Italian parliamentary democracy against criticism from sections of the left, not as the model he would offer for an ideal polity but as far better than anything that might conceivably replace it, and predictably cites both Mussolini's dictatorship and the Stalinist regimes as examples of probable alternatives. As Bobbio explains: 'The present writer belongs to a generation of people who lost their hopes more than thirty years ago, shortly after the end of the war, and have never recovered them, except for occasional moments, as rare as they were fleeting, and which came to nothing.'

Bobbio believes in representative rather than direct or participatory democracy, and attacks the demands for the latter made by the movements connected with 1968. He argues that direct democracy, if it were realisable, would be in danger of creating a 'total citizen'. Whilst his emphasis on the division of the public and private spheres is, of course, in keeping with the mainstream of Western liberalism, it is strange that he fails to acknowledge that the politicisation of the personal by the generation of 1968, about which he complains so much, had some positive consequences in Italy. And it is significant that Bobbio omits to mention that it was the women's movement which adopted the slogan 'the personal is political' and brought questions like divorce, contraception and abortion onto an Italian political agenda from which the Catholic church and a Communist Party in many ways subaltern to it had long excluded them.

The Socialist patriarch's blindspot is equally relevant in his discussion of referenda, which he rightly sees as the major instance of direct democracy in recent Italian political practice, but tends to belittle: the two most important referenda were, after all, those on divorce and abortion, and without such a gauge of public opinion Italy's politicians would undoubtedly have yielded to clerical clamour. Bobbio is anxious to explain that representative democracy does not mean parliamentary democracy alone, but should include councils of representatives, rather than delegates, inside such institutions as factories, schools and universities. However, he maintains that citizens *as* citizens rather than members of a particular interest group will always be best represented by the political parties, hence his lack of enthusiasm for referenda.

The current struggle over nuclear power demonstrates the inadequacy of Bobbio's conceptual framework. Those Italians concerned with the dangers of nuclear power are concerned as citizens, not as workers, students or businessmen, producers or consumers,

Blizzard country

Lesley Smith

He teaches somewhere in the north (a lilting
Protestant settlement) while the radio sends me
weather reports, jumbling names and record
temperatures, statistics of those still without power
after three days. Softly, the voices mourn
the icy deaths of animals. The best letters come
from these snow-bound days, written under oil lamps,
bloodshot eyes, grey paper, an intermittent
light. I conjure the shadows, retrospective, hard.

In summer he travels to Spain. 'Nostalgia'
he writes and I hear the slur of an unaccustomed
tongue 'attacks me'. He sits with the old men
whose reminiscences he later tangles into prose.
'I want to die following the woman I love down
a dirty foreign street'. He drinks to lay the fear
of being alone and dies passing through London
to a conference in Amsterdam. No one tells me,
for who would think that I might offer valediction
other than a letter marked 'not known at this address'.

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Northerners or Southerners. With the exception of Democrazia Proletaria no Italian political party has consistently opposed nuclear power — Pannella's recent *volte face* on the issue is saddening evidence of the Radicals' growing frivolity — and with varying degrees of hypocrisy the major parties are determined to prevent a referendum occurring this year whilst the popular memory of Chernobyl is vivid enough to counteract the mystifications of the technocrats.

Not all Bobbio's targets are on the left. He mounts a vigorous attack on the neo-liberals, pointing out that their intense hostility to the institutions of the welfare state will logically culminate in an assault on democracy itself, since the demands that gave rise to the welfare state are rooted in universal suffrage which gives the poor access to the political marketplace. Since he is unfamiliar with Scruton's appalling suggestion that the unemployed should be disenfranchised, one must give him the credit for logically deducing a hidden agenda that the American New Right, more anxious to represent themselves as 'libertarians' than their British counterparts — the port-swilling petty-bourgeois poseurs of Peterhouse — never admit in print.

Despite Bobbio's clarity of exposition and evident commitment to the rules of the democratic game, Richard Bellamy's extravagant introductory claims for his relevance to the practice of democratic socialism in Britain cannot really be sustained — most of Bobbio's substantive proposals have all the originality and radicalism of an Alliance manifesto. □

Tobias Abse is Research Fellow in Italian History at Darwin College, Cambridge and a contributor to New Left Review.

PAPERBACKS

Book-ends

Jenny Diski

DEATH IS A terrible shame. There you are, just about to peak into wisdom and maturity, when there *it* is, all enigmatic and inevitable, and definitely not our fault. Well, that's the story we like to tell ourselves, but I suspect that if death didn't exist we'd have to invent it. At least it's something to rely on as we dither our way through life.

According to John McManners, whom D. J. Enright quotes in his introduction to **The Oxford Book of Death** (Oxford, £4.95), death is 'our tragic limitation'. This is a wonderfully entertaining anthology but filled with a pervading sense of disappointment. All we're trying to do, after all, is get a little order in a physical universe much more inclined toward chaos. The disappointment stems from the hopelessly temporary nature of our order-making enterprise. 'I am afraid my sentences are becoming grammatically incorrect,' said Gide on his deathbed, rather disproving his point. It's as good a definition of death as any I've heard. Death is ungrammatical; a decay of structure, a final loss of the sense we hoped we were making. The rest of this month's selection suggest that McManners has it wrong. Life is our tragic limitation, with death as an anticlimatic lacuna . . .

Anticlimax and disappointment feature strongly in Stanley Middleton's **An After-Dinner's Sleep** (Methuen, £3.95). Alistair Murray, in his sixties, widowed and in retirement, reflects on his entirely orderly and proper life. Its events seem to be over as he goes through the motions of existence slightly to one side of the busyness of his children, neighbours and former colleagues. Then the reappearance of a lost love suggests an escape from the discomfort of ageing and waiting. This is a quiet, sorrowful book where the hesitant excitement of a new chance chafes against Murray's awareness that the replacement battery in his kitchen clock is likely to outlast him. It's a grim and honest reminder that we may grow out of youth towards old age carrying with us all the old emotional uncertainties.

The re-issue of Elizabeth Taylor's **A View of the Harbour** (Virago, £3.95) continues the theme of retirement, although, this time, it's a place that's waiting out its end. A decayed seaside resort out of season casts shadows over the lives of its inhabitants. Bertram, a retired Sunday painter, comes to paint the harbour, and flits in and out of the lives of the residents, half-involved, liking the image of himself as trusted friend but always with one eye on escape. Beth writes novels but, immersed in her narratives, fails to notice the real human dramas being played out around her. It's a sharp but humane view of life grinding to a halt. You know the funfair won't open when the season starts and that last year's visitors will be holidaying elsewhere.

The setting of Sharman Macdonald's novel, **The Beast** (Flamingo, £2.95) is mythic Hampstead, a place of limbo. What's new, you might think. Two couples, refugees of the 1960s, trickling helplessly toward middle age, picnic in a time-warp that bears a keen resemblance to Kenwood. There are dark gipsy men, comatose au pairs and steep hills to confront in their individual quests. It's an afternoon of magical renewal. Sharman Macdonald writes an acidic fable of 1980s angst but, like the setting, or perhaps like the 1980s themselves, the tone is too remote to allow you to care very much.

Finally, two real-life couples that only the bravest of novelists would dare to invent. The life and death of Joe Orton and Kenneth Halliwell is more a fable of its time than any modern fiction. John Lahr's biography, **Prick Up Your Ears** (Penguin, £3.95), has an overpowering scent of the 1960s. After a grey, emotionally neutral youth, sudden fame and fortune and the slightly easy pleasure of shocking the Establishment has Orton crowing Peter Panishly by 1967. Praised (overpraised?) by anyone who was anyone, he was in the fast stream of 1960s success. His long-time lover and one-time mentor, Kenneth Halliwell, however, had ground to a halt. Halliwell was left behind in the excitement to brood about mediocrity and failure, but the signs of depression and paranoia were overlooked, with fatal results for both. Strangely, their real-life melodrama had already been written in the novels the two men collaborated on in the early days. The publishers turned the manuscripts down; interesting, they said, but too fanciful and outrageous. As things turned out, Orton, with his commitment to stylised bad taste, overcame his publisher's fastidious distinction between fiction and non-fiction. The film of his life and death is on its way, so Orton, I suppose, gets the last ghostly laugh.

It's impossible to read about Jennifer and June in Marjorie Wallace's **The Silent Twins** (Penguin, £2.95) without a backward glance at Joe and Kenneth. The twins, now 23 and in Broadmoor serving an indeterminate sentence for arson, were elective mutes who spoke only to each other in a form of English that no one else could understand. Social services and the psychologists gave up on them, helpless and excluded by the sullen pair. They were teenage fantasists, writing of their dreadful and brutal sexual experiences in the language of Mills and Boon; transforming the thugs who gang-banged them in the local church into romantic heroes. It makes your heart ache. But increasingly their diaries, like those of Orton and Halliwell, speak of their own desperate relationship. They are locked in an impossible bind; two people who are each other's shadow self. They long for their own identity, but are terrified of separation. Orton and Halliwell played it to the death. Jennifer and June sit it out in Broadmoor, fighting every now and then so that someone will come and force them apart. □

Jenny Diski's first novel, Nothing Natural, *is now available in paperback from Methuen. Her second,* Rainforest, *will be published in June, also by Methuen.*

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Future of socialism

Nigel Pollitt, London SW2
No one needs a red rose logo — don't kid yourselves. Bleating about the media or the 'loony' effect just won't do either. The electorate are good at smelling rats: the kind that are interested first in power and only second in policies and principles.

The situation is outrageous and serious for us on the radical left who wish to see this country transformed into a democratic, participatory, socialist state. If the Labour Party persecutes and expels its radical elements, there will be no option but to form a separate, socialist party. That would certainly mean no left victory in Britain for several years to come. That is why it is crucial that all those of us who believe in equality as a principle that cannot be traded for cheap advantage must argue loudly that we are Labour's best friends, and in places like Liverpool and Lambeth where local parties go to the people on radical, committed manifestos, the people will give them — increased majorities.

Only then do we stand a chance of getting a man of the stature of Paul Boateng to be shadow Home Secretary and Ken Livingstone, Linda Bellos, Bernie Grant, Merle Amory and David Blunkett, who have all carried out and stood up for socialist principles, will have their answer. So will the *New Statesman*. Socialism is about supporting equality, not selling it out.

John Papworth, London NW8
Socialism is in danger of allowing itself to be overtaken by five kinds of crisis, global in scope and currently threatening the demise of civilisation: war, the population explosion, the squandering and depletion of natural resources and pollution. These four interlock and stem from the fifth: alienation — the basic condition of most of life for millions around the globe. People are alienated from the decisions and processes which govern their everyday lives in ways which our forebears never knew.

Who *wants* tower blocks, monster schools, larger police forces, united Europe, the shut-down of our local hospitals, the closure of our sub-post offices, the destruction of large areas of our rail network, the ousting of our local shops run by local people, the destruction of such forms of local government as we once had for the mammoth units of regional administration now forced upon us?

Did you say we have free votes in free elections? The average voter does not choose the candidate, s/he does not choose the policy and, much more importantly, s/he does not choose the values upon which the policies are based. There are forces playing upon the ballot box which make it a bottleneck rather than an open door through which the 'will of the people' finds expression.

If we want to rescue our civilisation from the shadows closing in on it and bring back the joy of life to our affairs we have to turn to genuinely local government of our villages and urban parishes such as we have never had before. As Camus puts it, 'Hope remains only in the most difficult task of all; to reconsider everything from the ground up, so as to shape a living society inside a dying society.'

Cllr, Mike Goodman, London SW6
Libertarian socialism has never been more relevant or persuasive. It requires, however, a political, historical and philosophical re-assessment.

Paul Hirst (Letters 3 April) restores Proudhon among socialist worthies and such recognition should not go unnoticed, but it hardly stops there. In fact in many senses it is time to kick Marx himself into touch and look instead at (for example) Rousseau, Kropotkin, Tom Paine and Emma Goldman. Historically, it becomes the French rather than the Russian

revolution that we assert. Literally it is to the writings of Shelley, Tolstoy, Hugo and Orwell that we turn. Internationally our perspective becomes worthy of our western democratic socialist tradition. The pillars of libertarian socialism provide both a treasure trove of intellectual and cultural armoury as well as a constant source of optimism and progress.

The implications for the Labour Party in terms of the here and now of specific policy development are little short of revolutionary. The applications of the libertarian approach are limitless but here are a few examples: In the policing debate we have a model for the clarification and regulation of the balance between protecting the individual's person and property and preserving her/his rights as a citizen; previously conceived contradictions no longer apply. In the crucial domain of economic strategy we can look the private sector in the eye and work with it rather than against it in promoting growth and up-to-date industrial response to unemployment. Common ownership takes on a new depth of meaning no longer restricted to the single 'nationalisation' track. In terms of democratic process the commitment to increased consultation and participation at a local level becomes part and parcel of a recognition of the community's role in planning the environment while also avoiding the dangers of insensitive and over-bureaucratic centralised control. Equal opportunities becomes part of an even wider struggle for emancipation and liberation, the perspective becomes total. Already we can see a radical transformation, the political ground has been reclaimed.

If the ultimate result of the Greenwich by-election is to generate a new wave of thinking within the Party, then in the long term that event may yet be seen as a most glorious blessing in disguise. Libertarian socialism alone offers no panacea but it is undoubtedly the way forward. Time will tell whether we are capable of grasping this opportunity with the confidence and determination it requires.

Colin Sweet, Director, Centre for Energy Studies, Southbank Polytechnic, London SE1
In your editorial (*NS* 6 March) you argued that socialism is being redefined somewhere between the absurdities of the hard left and the rhetoric of the right. You didn't actually define it. However, in the *Financial Times* of 23 March, displaying commendable courage, you offered us what you describe as a minimalist definition. Socialism, you said, can be 'defined as collective provision to counteract some of the effects of the market, and collective efforts to address specific problems'. As you rightly pointed out this captures the ground not only of the Liberals but also some of the Tories.

This splendid effort to capture the middle ground in the ideological debate is of course not exactly new. I recall in the late 1940s Herbert Morrison also redefined socialism when he described it as 'social responsibility for matters which are properly of social concern.' Or to go back even further, 'We are all socialists now' said Lord Hartingdon in 1884 from the Liberal front bench. Defining socialism away is not new. I find it a little difficult to swallow when it's described as 'hard thinking on the left'.

J. Stoneman, Leatherhead, Surrey
Some of the thinking in your special issue (*NS* 6 March) is interesting, provocative and exciting. This kind of thing must be essential if indeed socialism is to have a future.

Your authors suggest that many of the sacred cows of socialism must head to the abattoir, and some very different calves be reared. Paul Hirst suggests that social democracy requires three conditions, the last of which is the effectiveness of the private capitalist sector. He suggests (and this is picked up elsewhere in your issue) that the failure of capitalism to produce the wealth has in turn damned socialism. If this indeed be so, and if the social democracies need an active private capitalist sector, should we not rethink much of the philosophy of education today which appears to be designed not to produce competitive entrepreneurs on whom the capitalist segment of the economy must rely?

Howard Cheney, Shipston on Stour, Warks.
The dispute is between those who say all men are dogs, so the only economic motivator is greed. This is the Tory position,though even they draw back from killing the unproductive, the sick, the feeble or leaving them to starve on the streets. On the other hand, the communists/socialists, perceiving the tremendous inequalities and injustices under capitalism, tried to abate this by state interference, the choice being between the dictatorship of the enlightened (the party)

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ruthlessly enforced by police and labour camps and Berlin walls to stop the dissenters escaping, and the democratic socialists, who attempted to get change voluntarily by popular vote.

The experience of both has tended to confirm the 'all men are dogs' theory. Without the carrot of greed, the dictatorial communists have been unable to achieve other than low levels of production. The voluntary method has had difficulty in finding sufficient volunteers, and the imagined support of wage earners has proved an illusion, for when they had the chance they proved to have attitudes remarkably similar to the well-to-do. The problem is really a spiritual one. Failure to address this means that all our efforts are in vain.

Mike Freeman, Revolutionary Communist Party

The strength of the soft left argument is its recognition that there is no future for traditional Labour Party socialism. While Eric Heffer and Tony Benn and their dwindling band of hard left camp followers stick doggedly to the orthodoxies of the Alternative Economic Strategy of the early '70s, the contributors to the *New Statesman* debate at least try to come to terms with contemporary realities.

The weakness of the soft left is that in its attempt to formulate a new ideology of socialism it takes refuge in even more outdated notions. Thus, Roy Hattersley, Raymond Plant and Julian LeGrand echo the prejudice of 19th century reformers like Owen and Proudhon that the market is an eternal feature of human society. In his main theme essay, Paul Hirst repudiates the traditions of Bolshevism and endorses the outlook of the German social democrat Eduard Bernstein. Bernstein was among the first socialists to argue that changes in the ownership and control of industry and the expansion of the middle classes rendered the project of working-class revolution futile.

It is ironic that Labour's rethinkers should revert to such obsolete theories at the very moment when the impact of deepening recession contradicts them in practice and confirms the validity of the basic tenets of Marxism.

'Freedom as well as efficiency demands competition,' asserts Hattersley in the opening article of the *NS* special issue. Hattersley's enthusiasm for the market would be understandable if he were writing in the '50s or '60s, when worldwide capitalist expansion led to a rise in living standards in the West, and even allowed some Third World countries to drag themselves out of enforced backwardness. But today the movement of the market brings mass unemployment and poverty to every advanced country and famine and disease to the Third World.

For Paul Hirst, however, the notion of 'smashing capitalism' and ridding society of the tyranny and wastefulness of the market is an 'authoritarian vision'. His alternative is 'a genuinely libertarian socialism'. But what does this mean? Hirst spins grandiose phrases, such as 'associationalist socialism in a pluralist state', and calls for 'democratising and associationalising' institutions. But when he comes down to earth it is with a very dull thud: a future Labour government, he argues, should 'begin with a variant of the corporatism that was attempted in the '60s'.

All this high-powered rethinking and we end up back with Harold Wilson and George Brown in the Department of Economic Affairs! Hirst goes further in spelling out the consequences of such a return to Wilson-style class collaboration in reviving British capitalism in the '90s: he warns grimly that 'austerity measures may be required'. With his incomes policies and his social contract, Wilson did damage enough to the labour movement in the '60s and '70s. The prospect of a repeat performance under a Kinnock regime is a truly 'authoritarian vision'.

'The working class no longer has the capacity to bring about a socialist transformation of contemporary Britain,' insist Scott Lash and John Urry in the latest revival of the theory advanced by Bernstein nearly a century ago. They put their faith for progress in 'individual rights', presumably to be guaranteed by parliamentary legislation, the judiciary and the police, and a vaguely defined 'left political culture'.

It is worth recalling that the last time the working class was declared extinct was after Labour's 1983 election defeat. Within a year the miners went on strike in the biggest industrial threat to the established order in the post-war period. The defeat of the miners has had a demoralising effect on the whole labour movement. Yet workers at Ardbride and Caterpillar in Scotland and in town halls around the country have shown that they are still ready to fight back. Isolated and lacking in direction, such struggles are often held back and diverted by the official labour movement's concern to avoid any action that might embarrass Kinnock's election prospects.

The working class has a habit of upsetting the fatalistic predictions of social democrats. Within 20 years of Bernstein's infamous repudiation of the revolutionary role of the proletariat, the working class made the first socialist revolution in history. Despite the pessimism of the traditional left, today's recession opens up unprecedented opportunities for fundamental change in society.

Yet at present the paralysis of the left gives the advantage to the forces of the establishment. Today the state is systematically restricting civil liberties through anti-union and public order legislation. The courts and the police are taking full advantage of their extended powers to criminalise militants, activists and minorities. In these circumstances it seems perverse to look, as Lash and Urry do, to the same agencies to defend the individual rights of ordinary people.

We believe that there are thousands of activists who fear for the future of the working class, whichever party comes out on top in the election. We do not expect them to agree with the full programme of the RCP. Nor do we expect those with long associations with the Labour Party to change their views overnight. What we are proposing is a way of giving the working class a voice in British politics as the first step towards building a party that can bring real freedom to all by getting rid of the capitalist system.

Unfair jibe

Alan Brien, London NW5

It seems unlikely that Adewale Maja-Pearce (Letters 27 March) can have read the novel by V. S. Naipaul about which he complains I have written a nasty racist review. Nobody who has would be likely to demand — 'what does it matter where Naipaul is from?' Where Naipaul is from is a central theme of *The Enigma of Arrival*, hence the title. The novel would make little sense as a description of British life by a Briton. That is why I mentioned, in passing, Naipaul's 'racial background'. He did it first.

Adewale Maja-Pearce must get over the illusion that all mentions of race are racist. Perhaps a little role-reversal would help. Suppose I, a white European long resident in Africa, were to remark on how extraordinary I found it that black servants could have such delicate beauty. Would it display 'a nasty kind of racism' for a Nigerian journalist to object to that remark?

Televisual bubblegum

Jeremy Paxman, London W11

What a curious argument from Barry Cox (*NS* 27 March)! On the one hand there are the programmes of which he approves. These are made at LWT, are scripted in advance, and follow the principle that 'whatever is gathered on location should illustrate the basic message.' Or 'Lord preserve us from inconvenient facts or opinions.'

On the other hand are the programmes he dislikes. They are notably made at the BBC, where the Corporation 'appear to have been less able to get all those of its journalists who have little personal sympathy for Mrs Thatcher's Britain to look at it with clear minds'. I take this sentence (for which he produces not a single example in support) to mean that these fictitious hacks devise a thesis which they then set out to illustrate. Totally unlike LWT, of course. Also, in my experience, unlike the BBC.

Mr Cox thinks that current affairs in general have been overshadowed by changes (notably technological changes) in television news. He is right. But the solution he lukewarmly canvasses — a merger of the two — is well nigh unattainable if current affairs are to be defined merely as an illustrated tract. There are many of us who are troubled by the decline of old-fashioned contextual reporting and the emergence of pop-and-royalty televisual bubblegum. The antidote, surely, is more honest and original reporting, untrammelled either by political prejudice or by doctrinaire prescription.

Cross words

Joyce Kohn, Maidenhead, Berks

Do you find it amusing to horrify and offend your Christian readers with a blasphemous drawing (*NS* 27 March)? I would not have expected to find anything so vicious and despicable in any publication not issued by the National Front.

James Davies, London E11

I read the *NS* from time to time in the public library as purchase would be money down the drain. The crucifix cartoon was both obscene and nauseating. The *NS* is now quite the worst of the very boring left-wing publications, and I even read the *Listener*. I see you are now going further down market. Hoxton would seem to be the ideal area for your very unpatriotic and rubbishy publication.

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SINCERE, ATTRACTIVE widow, independent, 58, Continental origin. Interested: travel, theatre, music, seeks man preferably widower, similar age and interests, for companionship. N. London. Box (15)4791. W15.25

SLIM, ATTRACTIVE, male graduate 50, artistic cultural interests, wishes meet attractive woman, long-term relationship. Box (15)4784. W15.26

TWO WOMEN wish to meet two men who value style, wit and real communication, aged between 28 & 45. Photo appreciated. West Midlands area. Box (15)4797. W15.27

WOMAN, INTELLIGENT, perceptive, witty, keen sailor — seeks committed relationship with man of generous spirit, 45-55, who loves life, food and wine. (South East). Box (15)4779. W15.28

PURSUITS

FEMALE COMPANY 30-45 sought by professional man, young 50s, for weekend rail trips in UK. Sightseeing and cultural experience. Planning over a meal in London. Box (15)4790. W15.5

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MEETINGS

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AGENDA

FOR DETAILS CALL JANET BANKS 01-739 1645

Deadline: 2pm Mondays

FRI 10 APR

SHAW SOCIETY. Professor Stanley Weintraub on 'GBS on Queen Victoria', at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn. Coffee 6.30 p.m. Meeting 7 p.m.

SAT 11 APR

GREAT SALE OF BOOKS Prints and Postcards, Swiss Cottage Community Centre, Winchester Road, NW3. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Entrance 10p. Org. North London 7 Days Fair Committee, 16 St John Street, EC1.

WED 15 APR

7.30 p.m. Central London Fabian Society Jeff Cooper of The Socialist Environment & Resource Association on 'Labour & The Environment', at 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1.

CAMPAIGN

DEPRESSED BY THE OPINION POLLS? Tactical Voting can deny the Thatcher Government a third term. Help TV 87 to inform voters (Alliance & Labour) how to make their votes count. Send donation to Tactical Voting, 61 Sotheby Road, London N5 2UP. (Send s.a.e. for information about campaign or ring 01-354 0823).

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BACKCHAT

INFRA DIG

Common wealth

Diana Eden

ONCE AGAIN, SPRING has come to Wandsworth. Her capricious, teasing fingers glide gently o'er the common and the neighbouring, stirring streets. But hark! Is that the cuckoo's call we hear? And soft! Is not that long, low moan the cry of the closest companion of the conspiring sun — the churning concrete mixer? Aye, light nights have returned and gentrification recommences its ritual on every corner of the builder's busiest borough. House-martins and speculators feather their nests again as the sap and the property prices steadily start to rise.

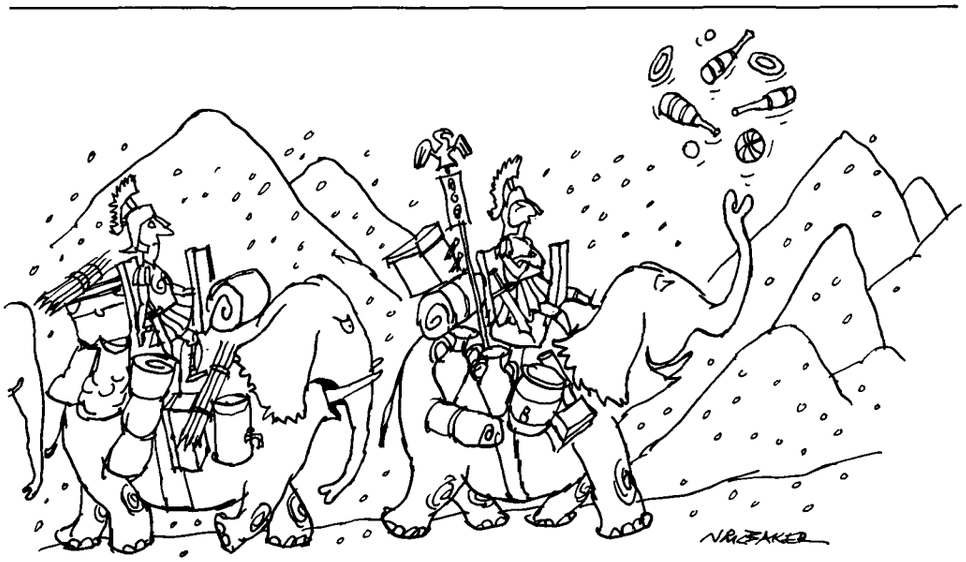
I have lived in South London, man and boy, for almost 20 years. I started out, a single parent, in two mildewed, rented rooms, before progressing, via brief television and less brief marriage contracts, to a Victorian terraced house. So, although I don't know what my party's current line is re home-ownership, my CP card lies side by side with mortgage papers in the pine dresser.

In my defence — you'll notice I'm defensive — I could recite the usual litany about the house having been a poxy, unplumbed slum and recount the hunnish months spent filling 18 skips with rubbish. At the time, the folly of the venture was encapsulated in my strapping northern brother's proclamation that I was off my bloody head. How wrong he was, for blessed are we who dwell within the basin of the Thames. I now sit, uneasily but steadfast, in a home which is probably worth two-thirds of County Durham.

All this is no defence at all. We of the property-owning class — whether guilt-free or whether caught upon a conscience-striken hook baited with prudence, fear and greed — are a spreading, cancerous mass. Ten years ago the 'local common' was an apt and adjectival term. Old folks played bowls and younger ones played hookey around its ponds and soccer pitches. And then the media folk invaded and rape and pillaging began.

A timbered, ecologically-sound Childrens Corner is now the focal point of once neglected acres. Shrill and Sloaney hunting cries of 'Henry!' and 'Amelia!' are answered by packs of toddlers clad in Osh-Kosh jeans (a snip at 20 quid a throw) or dachshunds scampering eagerly to heel (though, this season, the spaniel seems to have found favour as a witty accessory to 'country' kitchens and estate-cars). Across the common off-duty telly people wander, no doubt devising programmes on the demise of the indigenous working class, and freelance hacks compose sanctimonious sentences destined to appear, fortnightly, in the *Statesman*. The straggling row of local shops has been blitzed by our pretensions. The butcher and the baker have risen from the ashes, Phoenix-like and useless, recycled into wine bars, estate agents and boutiques. When, recently, I had an urgent, Freudian need of a tin-opener and some knickers, a bus journey was required to affect their modest purchase.

But one service we gentrifiers have performed remains as yet unsung. The houses that we covet not infrequently belong to immigrants who bought them in the 1950s, when our nation was extending its self-interested hospitality and welcome. Increasingly, these are the families who are selling up and moving out. My former neighbour Roy called to say a fond and philosophical farewell. Funded by the Yuppie-purchase of his home, he was retiring from 30 years with London Transport and returning to Jamaica to buy a farmhouse and some land. What, I wonder, is the left and ideologically-correct reaction to the knowledge that people like myself comprise the market force that facilitates that Highest Tory Idyll: voluntary repatriation? We came, we saw, we bought and gentrified — *and we sent black families back*. And we continue so to do. For, once again, Spring has come to Wandsworth. □



'Do you intend to do that all the way over?'

FIRST PERSON

Turner round

Al Weil

THE TATE'S MALADMINISTRATION of the Turner bequest leads directly back to Anthony Blunt, a man whose effect on British art has been at least as unfortunate as his effect on the nation's security.

When, in 1939, Blunt became Deputy Director of the Courtauld Institute of Art, the systematic study of art history had just started to be considered of sufficient importance to qualify as a separate branch of history teaching. Himself a self-taught art historian, Blunt played a major role in the struggle for recognition of the new discipline. The Courtauld, a state-financed Institute of London University, was the first — and, for some years, the only — institution to issue BA, MA and PhD degrees in art history. In line with Blunt's specialist knowledge (he became Director in 1947), it stressed Italian and French art, giving only a nod to the British variety.

In 1954, Blunt used the publication of *The Catalogue of the Courtauld Collection* to confirm his personal disdain for British art. He wrote the Preface to Douglas Cooper's lengthy Introduction, which denigrates the art of Turner and of Constable and describes English painting in their tradition as 'bloodless', a product of 'the insidious banality of the English vision'.

In addition to his directorship at the Courtauld, Blunt served on many influential committees in the art world. He also had an influence on appointments to most art professorships and his approval became essential to Courtauld graduates who aspired to teach or to take up positions in art museums.

Nowhere are the disastrous consequences of Blunt's influence on the course of art history more in evidence than at the Tate Gallery which, since 1980, has been under the direction of Blunt's longtime associate, Alan Bowness. While teaching at the Courtauld, Bowness joined Blunt and Cooper in their anti-British art stance by hailing Cooper's *Catalogue* Introduction as a 'pioneering and indispensable study'.

As for Turner's art bequest to the nation — a treasure of 19,500 watercolours, oils and sketches — one might have expected Britain's foremost art-history study centre to speak out on the country's long-neglected legal and moral obligation to build a proper Turner Gallery in line with the stipulations which governed the nation's acceptance of his art. But neither Blunt nor his successor, Professor Peter Lasko — nor Alan Bowness, who became the Courtauld's Deputy Director in 1978 — ever spoke out to decry the injustice to Britain's greatest artist.

The Keeper of British art at the Tate is a Cambridge/Courtauld colleague, Martin Butlin. When the President of the Turner Society, Henry Moore, led a petition in 1975 to the then Prime Minister asking that a Turner Gallery be established at Somerset House, Butlin voiced the

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Tate's opposition, claiming that Somerset House was unsuitable to house a major art collection. Neither the fact that some of the Tate's own galleries do not meet the safety standards demanded for Somerset House, nor the findings of two architectural studies which declared Somerset House eminently suitable for the purpose, budged the Tate from its avowal to keep all its Turners at Millbank.

Having stood by while the Tate scuttled the popular move on behalf of Turner, the Courtauld now asked that Somerset House be made available for several of *its* bequests: containing mostly continental art. Cynically, the issue of Somerset House's deficiencies was never again mentioned by the Courtauld or the Tate.

An even more cynical move to deny the public a Turner Gallery was to follow. In 1977, the Turner Society appealed to The Queen to help establish a Turner Gallery in Her Jubilee Year. A few days after the petition was handed in, the heads of the Tate, the National Gallery and the British Museum met. In unity for once, they squelched the popular move, jointly declaring that no Turner Gallery was necessary and that the bequest works best be left divided between them.

Two years later the Clore Foundation decided that a Turner Gallery would be a fitting tribute to the late Sir Charles Clore. Though the Foundation complimented the Turner Society for its campaign, it gave the money to Blunt's disciples at the Tate, who had amply demonstrated their lack of appreciation of Turner's intentions. One of Turner's stipulations had been that his works be shown in rotation. The Tate's display has always been largely static, uninformative and unrepresentative. From all indications, nothing at the new Clore Gallery will improve on the manner of display beyond enlarging it.

Under the government's 'arm's length' principle, an art administrator like Bowness does not have to account to the Arts Minister, Parliament or the public for his interpretation of art history. Though, in principle, Bowness must account to the Tate's Board of Trustees, which appointed him, in practice the Board generally refers public queries and criticisms back to Bowness. This leaves him judge and jury.

It's time for a change from the Blunt inspired outlook on British art. For a start, there should be an inquiry into the Tate's maladministration of the Turner bequest, the art market value of which must now stand at around £1 billion. Under the terms of his will, Turner left his art to the people of this country — not the National Gallery or the Tate. Wherever the physical repository of the bequest might be, its supervision should be placed in the hands of an independent Board of Trustees, representing the people. □

Al Weil, a long-time campaigner for a reassessment of British art, was one of the protestors outside the Tate when the Queen opened the Clore Gallery last week.

FOOD

Open sesame

Colin Spencer

HEALTH AND WHOLEFOOD shops were the first to stock traditional Japanese foods. Now, they're becoming more and more available as the popularity of cooking in different styles grows. Here is a guide to some of them in the order of my own use and preference, including the one which we are familiar with from the Chinese take-away: soy sauce. But a word of warning about this most popular condiment. If it is reasonably priced, it is synthetic. The soy made from the fermented beans will have 'naturally fermented' on the label. The Japanese version comes in two kinds:

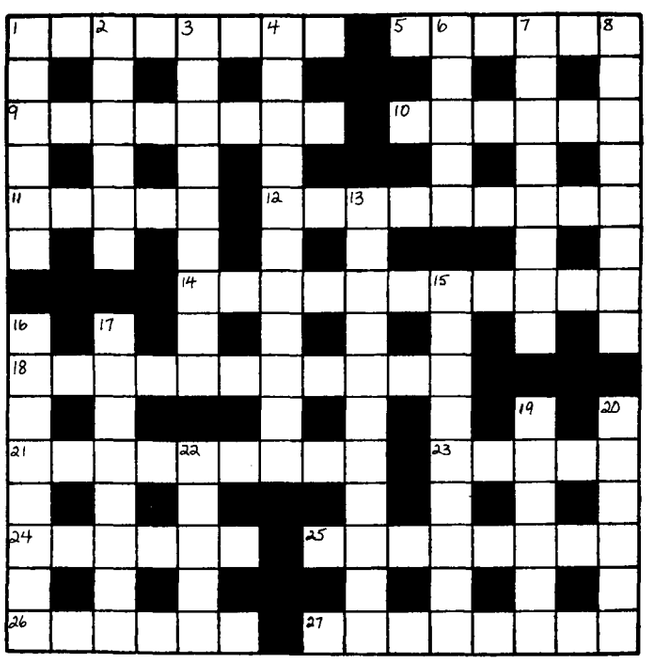
Shoyu, which is sweeter and lighter than the Chinese type. It comes in light and dark; the light is thinner and can be used as flavouring without changing the colour of a dish.

Tamari is a thicker sauce, and dark; it is made without the addition of wheat and is often used as a dipping sauce. I love it, as the flavour is very powerful, but most cooks use it with more discretion than I do.

Sesame seeds: These are delicious. Roast them in a dry pan over a flame and shake the pan so that they colour evenly. When golden and smelling of the oil, they are done and can be kept in a bottle or

Weekend Crossword 1553

£3 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1553, New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8BA, by first post 21 April.



Name_____

Address_____

_____

ACROSS

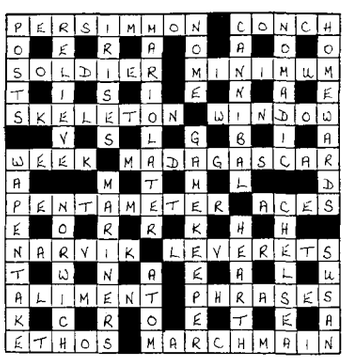
1. Percentage against dancing (8)
5. Passage which would make Diana absent-minded (6)
9. Rest for the living? (8)
10. Shoe which makes a number go on strike (6)
11. Bulb which may be lit up (5)
12. Being novices they pose badly if they lose their leader (9)
14. Having too few workers, we are a little bit ahead of the cards in the workshop (11)
18. Kind of wisdom seen to be messed up by the House (6,5)
21. A song about bad times may be wormwood (9)
23. Quiet-sounding music (5)
24. Bachelor goes to court, becoming a knight (6)
25. Do the doctor's job, having gone to pieces with Aids (8)
26. Having one's food, for example, while holding the container (6)
27. Done badly round the edge and so not well-balanced (8)

DOWN

1. Measures used for copper pieces (6)
2. Means of decoration which might make one ill (6)
3. Against a former love being made into something to eat (9)
4. Things in the garden which keep the home in vegetables (11)
6. Instruct as individuals at the beginning of term (5)
7. Pose adopted by bird in a sort of duet (8)
8. Northern district which gives point to an unusual destiny (8)
13. Ring the depot about ten for show (11)
15. Dissolute rogues hold the old man behind a hill (9)
16. Game of science followed by the crowd (8)
17. The wreck of the Yantze ship made them stay (8)
19. Support for a short time (6)
20. Get to the top and kill (6)
22. Halfwit who sees nothing in a backward type (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1551



Prizewinners to 1551

Mr Don Berry
(London SW2)

Ms Bridget Winn
(Leamington Spa)

Liselotte Leschke
(Bristol)

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tin with a tight fitting lid. These roasted seeds can be ground, then mixed with sea salt, one of salt to four or five of sesame, and used as a condiment. The macrobiotic diet made this famous as gomashio. Unroasted, the seeds can be sprinkled on bread and pastries before baking.

Ginger root: This knobbly root is now very familiar to us. It can be peeled and grated. You only need about one to two ounces to flavour a stir-fry or a sauce. Or it can be cut very thinly and used in a curry.

Wasabi is thought of as Japanese horseradish. It is a root which grows on the edge of rivers. It is served, powdered and made into a paste, as a small mound on the side of a plate with the sushi or tempura in a Japanese restaurant. You can buy the powder in tins: mix a little with water and leave for 10-15 minutes for the heat to come through. It can be used instead of mustard and is exceptionally marvellous for all those who like their palates assaulted.

Rice vinegar: I love this vinegar for use in vinaigrettes and sauces. It is light and mild with a pleasant flavour.

Umeboshi: These are pickled plums. A rather odd flavouring to appear over here but one which has a cult around it. They are very salty and sharp, good as a pickle with rice dishes, considered to be a great digestif and rich in vitamin C. They are an acquired taste; though I like them myself. There is also an umeboshi vinegar, which is red and salty; a few drops of which perk up a stir-fry.

Tofu: This is basically coagulated soya milk. It is high in protein and, for vegans and vegetarians, can become a staple part of the diet. It comes in various types. There is the packet Morinaga which needs to be drained and dried slightly between kitchen paper towels before being sliced and used in a stir-fry. If using it for desserts, it can be mixed with honey and fruit immediately after draining. These packets keep well unopened in the refrigerator. Tofu is also made here and sold under several brand names and tends to be of a drier consistency than the Japanese version. There is also a smoked tofu which adds some flavour to the stuff — for wouldn't you know, this miracle food, which could save the starving and the malnourished of the world, tastes like cotton-wool paste. I persistently order it at Far Eastern restaurants, thinking that they might know how to make it more appealing to the palate, but the best they can do is to mulch the stuff into a paste, flavour it heavily with herbs and spices, mix it with egg, cover it with chopped spring onions and fry like an omelette.

Seaweeds: These are also part of the vegan cult myth, rich in minerals and vitamins, but inhospitable to my own palate.

Miso comes in all colours and varieties. It is a soy bean paste fermented with salt and grains. Soup is made from it. It is also used as a flavouring in stir-fried food and as a dipping sauce. It is high in protein, minerals and vitamins and, since it has a powerful flavour, is very much an acquired taste. It does make a marvellous spread, though, mixed with two parts tahini or sesame or peanut butter. And, if used instead of satay for a kebab of tofu and vegetables, even the tofu acquires some taste.

An excellent paperback recently published gives masses of recipes for the use of all these ingredients: *Japanese Vegetarian Cookery* by Leslie Downer (Cape, £7.95). □

Weekend competition

No 2970 **Set by Gray Dorn**

What *did* Reagan say to Kinnock and Healey on their recent visit? Did he even know who they were? Did he even know what day it was? Answers, please, in the form of an excerpt from his welcoming address or the ensuing conversation. 200 words maximum, for Wednesday 22 April.

No 2967 **Set by Jim Yorke**

Suggestions for the most boring *Spectator* competitions imaginable.

Report **By Gray Dorn**

Greetings from Shoreditch, gateway to the mysterious East. While the news journalists engage in some of the most savage territorial disputes since the Malvinas (it's an open-plan office and not everyone likes the plan), we comp consultants have cheerfully accepted *our* allotted space (fine views of a fire escape were it not for the frosted glass) and got down to work. To shoe fetishists — among the high-heel wholesalers I've even spotted 'Dawn Grey Footwear' — and fascists, Shoreditch's appeal is obvious; no doubt it has other attractions but I've yet to find time for sightseeing, so engrossed have I been in your entries. At first I couldn't believe that *Spectator* comps were as boring as you suggested: on checking a copy I discovered you'd got it about right. Two smartarses simply set boring *NS* comps; Kate Short disqualified herself for misspelling 'oxymoron' and thinking 'euphuism' was a figure of speech (as any fool knows it's simply high-flown language). But should we ease up on the *Spectator* I wonder? After all, any magazine which employs Taki has enough on its plate. Or should we go in for the kill, drop our cover price to 10p and relaunch *The Nation* as a freesheet? I can't decide. Meanwhile £10 each to the winners.

Mixed Doubles

One of two writers sharing the same surname (e.g. P.D. and Henry James) addresses a *Triolet de Reproche* to one of a similarly linked pair, mistakenly assuming the addressee responsible for his or her partner's oeuvre. This partner replies similarly to the second member of the first pair, under the same misapprehension.
Both verses, please.

BOB SCOTT

Competitors are invited to write an imaginary conversation between Johnson and Boswell on the decimalisation of currency and the metrication of linear measure, introducing the concept of duodecimalisation and making prophetic allusion to binary calculation and computing machines. Significant mention must be made of Oliver Goldsmith, Mrs Thrale and Lord Chesterfield. Maximum 150 words.

ERIC SWAINSON

Walters both

The letters and diaries of both Walter Bagehot and Walter Pater contain no mention of cricket. On the assumption that both were enthusiasts and that all evidence was later destroyed by the two families, could we have, please, an extract from *either* a letter to Pater from Bagehot, *or* a letter to Bagehot from Pater, describing *either* the climax of the famous 1867 match at Lords' *or* the 1872 fiasco. 150 words.

D.A.PRINCE

Next year celebrates the Spanish Armada's humiliation (1588), and the arrival of William of Orange (1688). However, it also marks the centenary of the County Councils Act (1888). Sixteen lines, please, on this anniversary, as they might have been written by any poet alive at the time of the two earlier events.

WILL BELLENGER

Could we have 24 reasons why the Conservatives are certain to win the next election?

GEORGE COWLEY

Competitors are asked to write an extract from a parliamentary exchange between Disraeli and Gladstone upon the theme of Free Trade as it affected pearl-button making; dealing with the import of mother-of-pearl from Australia and the export of buttons to the French fashion trade and the undergarment manufacturers of New York. Biblical quotations should be limited to six.

MARGARET ROGERS

Devise the most boring *New Statesman* competition imaginable: e.g. 'Write in the style of Fay Weldon or Peter de Vries an excerpt from *Emmerdale Farm* or *EastEnders* in which Oxford University's new Chancellor Roy Jenkins figures.'

GEORGE MOOR

There has of late been a lively correspondence in such publications as the *Church Times* on controversial ecclesiastical innovations. How might the polemics against, it might be, the female ministry or the abolition of Lammastide, have been conducted by an earlier champion of orthodox verities: a recusant poet, a Tractarian or Evelyn Waugh provide suitable paradigms.

CYNTHIA HALL

Compose a poem of two stanzas, four lines each, with the following metrical pattern: iamb, monosyllabic foot, anapest, iamb/anapest, monofoot, anapest/trochee, trochee, trochee, trochee/iamb, iamb, iamb, extolling prefabricated housing enthusiastically when read in the normal fashion, but condemning it roundly when read backwards. The rhymes should be three-syllable cross-rhyme with inverted spelling.

T. GRIFFITHS

1987 marks the one-thousandth anniversary of the accession to the French throne of Hugh Capet, founder of the Capetian dynasty that ruled France till 1792. Competitors are asked for a 16-line speech, in French and in the Alexandrine metre, from a 'lost' tragedy by Racine on the life and death of this 'founding father'.

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

Competitors are invited to set any competition in the English language in which Basil Ransome-Davies or Noel Petty are extremely unlikely to win a prize.

PAMELA JANE POOH

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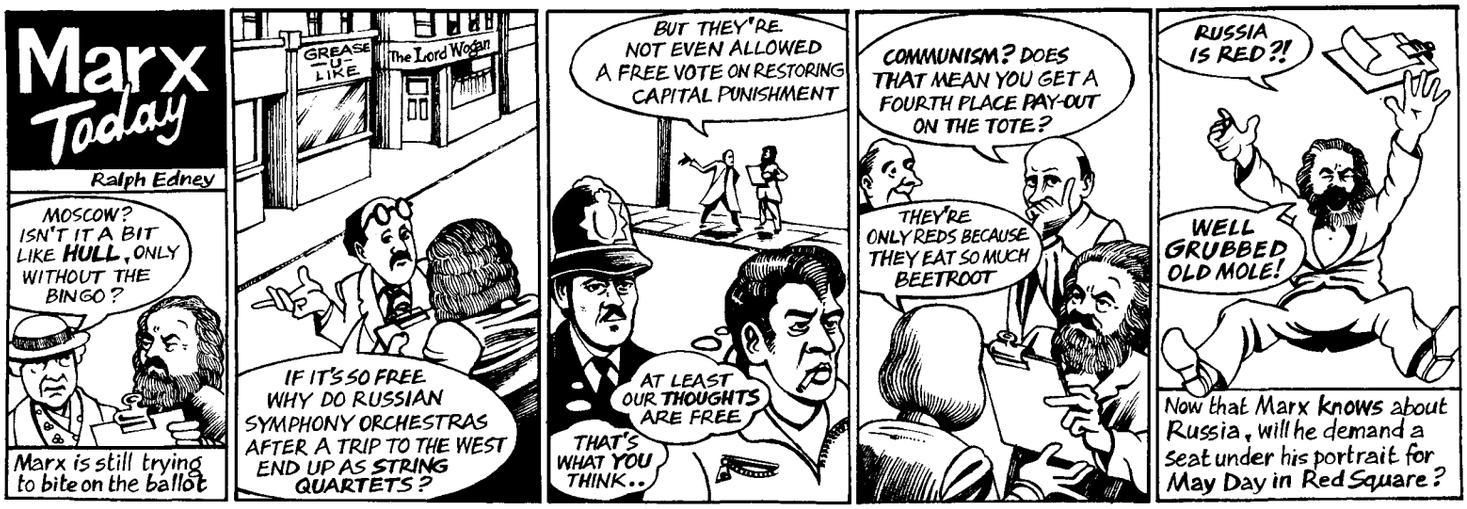
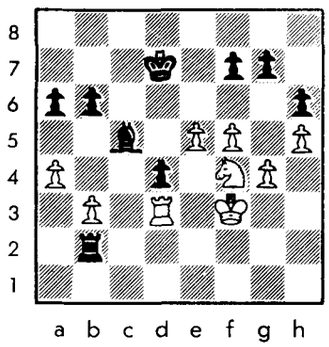

Marx Today
Ralph Edney
MOSCOW? ISN'T IT A BIT LIKE HULL, ONLY WITHOUT THE BINGO?
Marx is still trying to bite on the ballot
GREASE -U- LIKE
The Lord Wogan
IF IT'S SO FREE WHY DO RUSSIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS AFTER A TRIP TO THE WEST END UP AS STRING QUARTETS?
BUT THEY'RE NOT EVEN ALLOWED A FREE VOTE ON RESTORING CAPITAL PUNISHMENT
AT LEAST OUR THOUGHTS ARE FREE
THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK..
COMMUNISM? DOES THAT MEAN YOU GET A FOURTH PLACE PAY-OUT ON THE TOTE?
THEY'RE ONLY REDS BECAUSE THEY EAT SO MUCH BEETROOT
RUSSIA IS RED?!
WELL GRUBBED OLD MOLE!
Now that Marx knows about Russia, will he demand a seat under his portrait for May Day in Red Square?

Chess



KARPOV ONLY needed 11 games to settle his best-of-14 match against Sokolov. Since losing the London-Leningrad match to Kasparov he somehow hasn't quite seemed his old self, yet all the trademarks of his positional craft were on show again in Linares. The diagram gives the position after 39 moves in game 10, with Karpov (White) enjoying the advantages of 2 pawn islands v 3, the more active minor piece, more active King, and white-square control. Notice the cramping advance of the pawn-majority, a recurring theme in Karpov's best games. The one factor in Sokolov's favour is that the Black Rook is very active. Play continued: **40. e6+ Ke8 41. Ke4 a5** To be avoided if possible. 41 . . . Rb1 at once may be a little better. **42. Rf3 Rb1 43. Nd5 Rg1 44. Kd3! Rxg4 45. f6 Bd6** To stop Nc7+. There is an obvious objection to 45 . . . gxf6 and 45 . . . fxe6 allows 46. f7+ Kd7 47. Nxb6+ Kc7 48. Nc4 followed by Ne5-g6. **46. Nxb6 Rg5** This allows a decisive liquidation, but 46 . . . gxf6 47. Rxf6 is even worse. **47. fxg7 Rxg7 48. Nc4 Bb4 49. exf7+ Rxf7 50. Rxf7 Kxf7 51. Ne5+ Kf6 52. Nc6 Be1 53. Nxd4 Bb4** Not yet 53 . . . Kg5? 54. Nf3+, but now he is threatening to go for the h-pawn. **54. Nc6 Be1 55. Ke2 Bc3 56. Kd3 Be1 57. Kc4 Kg5 58. Nxa5! Bxa5 59. b4 Bd8 60. a5 Kxh5 61. Kb5 Bg5 62. a6 Be3 63. Kc6 1-0.**

This result means that the 1987 world championship match will be the *fourth* match between Kasparov and Karpov. Back in 1984 there was scepticism about the amount of enthusiasm that could be raised for a contest between two Russians with barely distinguishable names. Thanks to the wonderful games of the 1985 and 1986 matches another K-K encounter now gets a different reception. Bids to stage the next match must be submitted to the FIDE offices by 30 April.

In the first of their matches Kasparov had to absorb a hard lesson in how to cope with the style of his permanent opponent. If Karpov is now to have any chance of regaining the title, he needs to acquire some of the dynamic qualities of the young champion. The following game, played on top board in the European club championship finals, suggests that Anatoly is ready to learn. Using an opening nuance that Gary sprang on him, Karpov plays for the initiative with an isolated pawn and wins very much in the style of Kasparov:

Karpov-Beliavsky, Moscow 1986. QGD. 1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Bg5 Be7 5. Nf3 h6 6. Bxf6 Bxf6 7. e3 0-0 8. Rc1 c6 9. Bd3 dxc4 10. Bxc4 Nd7 11. 0-0 e5 12. h3! Kasparov's move, the point being that after the older 12. Bb3 Black could continue 12 . . . exd4 13. exd4 Re8 followed by . . . Nf8 and . . . Be6. **exd4 13. exd4 Nb6** But now 13 . . . Re8 14. Qb3 is not pleasant for Black. **14. Bb3 Bf5 15. Re1 a5** And Beliavsky plays Karpov's move! In a couple of games from last year's Soviet championship his choice had been 15 . . . Qd7. I think he might have done better to stick with that. Exchanging all the Rooks in the e-file would certainly improve Black's position, whereas the advance of the a-pawn is double-edged. **16. a3 Qd7** The marvellous 22nd game of the London-Leningrad match went 16 . . . Re8 17. Rxe8+ Qxe8 18. Qd2 Nd7 19. Qf4 Bg6 20. h4! Qd8 21. Na4! and Kasparov maintained the initiative. **17. Ne5 Bxe5 18. Rxe5 Rfe8 19. Qe2 Rad8** According to Karpov Black should play 19 . . . a4. **20. Re1 Rxe5 21. Qxe5 a4** But since 22. Nxa4 Nxa4 23. Bxa4 Qxd4 24. Qxf5 Qxa4 is drawish, what's the difference? **22. Qc5! axb3 23. Re7!** Just the sort of lightning tactical strike for which Kasparov is famous! Now both 23 . . . Qxd4 24. Re8+ Kh7 25. Qxf5+ and 23 . . . Qc8 24. Qxb6 are bad for Black, so Beliavsky gives up his Queen for Rook, Bishop and pressure on b2. **Qd6 24. Re8+ Rxe8 25. Qxd6 Nc4 26. Qb4 b5** Black nearly has adequate compensation because of the variation 27. Qxb3 Re1+ 28. Kh2 Nd2 and . . . Nf1+ with perpetual. **27. d5! cxd5 28. Nxd5 Bc2 29. Qc3 Rd8 30. Nf4 Rd1+ 31. Kh2 Nd2 32. h4 Bf5 33. f3 g5 34. hxg5 hxg5 35. Ne2 g4 36. Ng3 Be6 37. f4 Nf1+ 38. Nxf1 Rxf1 39. Qe5 Bc4 40. Kg3 Rd1 41. f5 Rd5 42. Qe4 1-0.** Black's g-pawn falls and his King becomes fatally exposed, e.g. 42 . . . Rd2 43. Qxg4+ Kf8 44. f6 etc.

Solution [from 3 April, **Pervakov:** 6Q1/8/7q/2B5/4p3/2K1pp2/p6p/k7]: **1. Bd4 Qb6 2. Bxb6 h1 = Q 3. Bd4 Qd1 4. Qd1! e2!** And now to recharge that battery. **5. Bh8! f2** If 5 . . . Kb1 6. Qb6+ and 5 . . . e1 = Q+ 6. Qxe1 Qxe1+ 7. Kc2+ is the basic mating pattern. **6. Qg7!** and since 6 . . . Kb1 fails to 7. Qb7+ Black cannot avoid a lethal discovered check. E.g. 6 . . . Qc1+ 7. Kb3+ or 6 . . . e1 = Q+ 7. Kc4+.

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☐ A Trustee of the British Vegetarian Society and a long-time member of its national council has resigned after he was discovered selling beefburgers at his mini-market at Tollerton, near York. A fellow vegetarian found beefburgers, sausages, bacon and other products in the freezer at the shop. Mr Turner resigned before a council meeting due this weekend. — *Guardian* (Celia Ellacott)

☐ Firemen yesterday had to free a fat cat stuck in a catflap at its home in Hillcrest Road, Berry Hill. — *Daily Telegraph* (Chloe Wainwright, aged 14)

☐ Camden's Mayor Mary Cane did not want the appellation Miss, Mrs or Ms to be put on her passport when she applied for one recently. The Labour councillor just wanted to be plain Mary Cane. 'Sorry no can do' said the passport office. 'Why not?' replied a perplexed Mary. 'Because that is the form used only by people who have had a sex-change operation,' she was told. — *Willesden & Brent Chronicle* (A. R. Horwell)

☐ As staff in an old people's day centre in Aberdeen passed out the free butter, cheese and milk to the pensioners, one ould buddie observed grimly, 'That Mrs Thatcher's no doin this for kindness. She's just tryin' to kill us aff wi' cholesterol.' — *Sunday Post* (George Moor)

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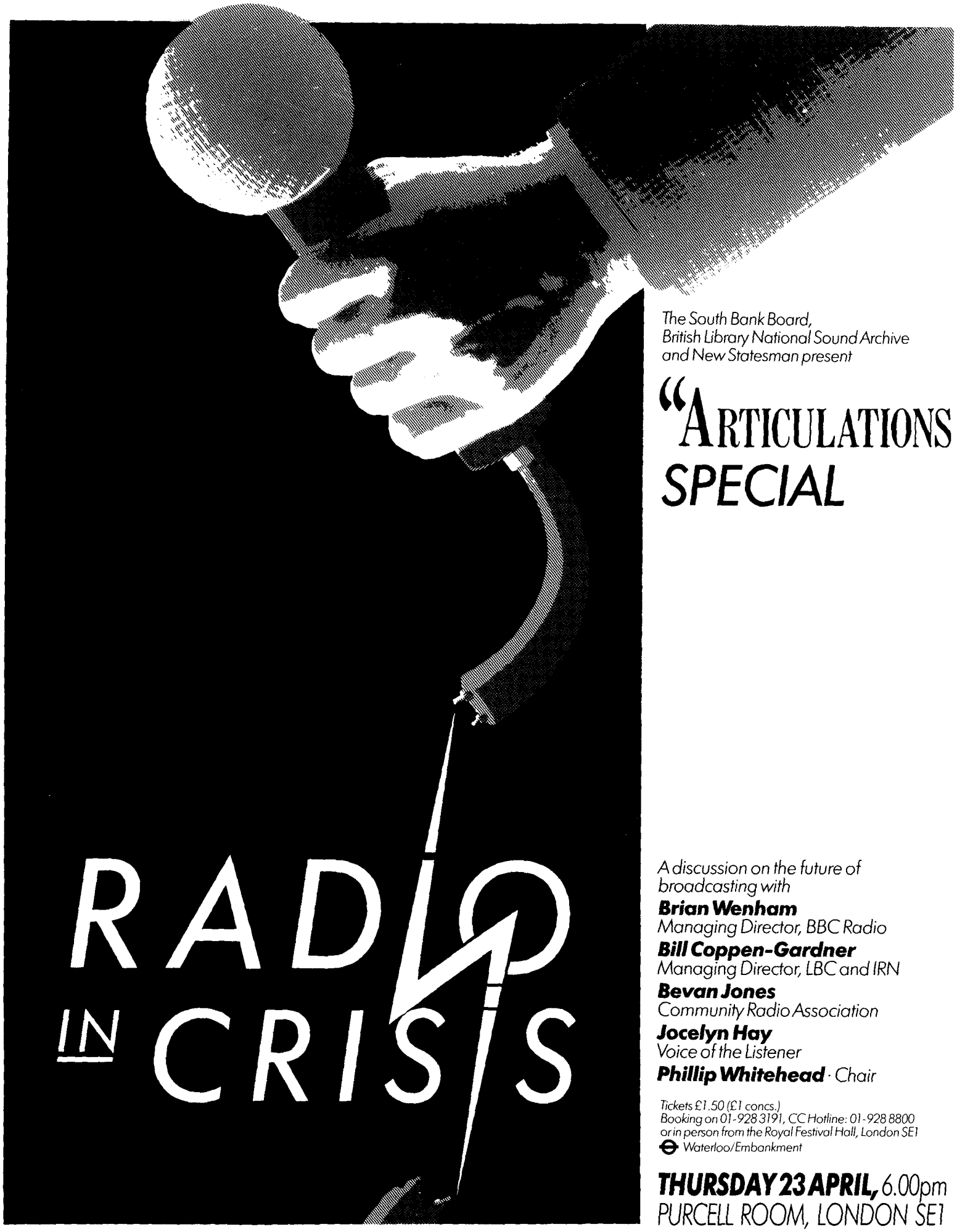

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